

AUSTRALIA



and
Other
POEMS

William H. Elsum



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AUSTRALIA
AND OTHER POEMS

TO
MY BELOVED—AUSTRALIA,
I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

AUSTRALIA

and Other Poems

BY

WILLIAM H. ELSUM

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MELBOURNE, SYDNEY, ADELAIDE and BRISBANE

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SONGS
OF
NATION-MAKING

AUSTRALIA.

THE COMING.

Land of the giant-souled fathers of history,
Heritage vast to their valorous kin;
Land of light pleasure, of magical mystery;—
Land where life's wonders but cease—to begin.

Vessels full-sailed o'er the ocean sped gloriously,
Laden with hopes of the subsequent life;
Stalwart souls, fervent to struggle victoriously:
Ready and glad for the strenuous strife.

What tho' hearts bled, and the home-links snapt
sundering?
Scorned were the leagues 'twixt the old and the
new;
What tho' the seas raged in monotone thundering?
Mocked were the tempests that passionate blew.

Hearts were aglow with the hopes of futurity,
Strong men sang strength in the fever of youth;
Childhood (all wond'ring) stood pledge as security—
Bodies and souls—for the mystical South.

Impetuous storm was the new world's beginning :
Mutinous wrong and the struggle for right ;
Much that was ill, but the good ever winning—
Till the soul of Australia stepped forth from the
night.

THE PIONEERS.

Out of the womb of the ages forth issued our fathers
resurgent :
Toilers and wooers of fortune, and strenuous fram-
ers of commerce ;
(Sons of the doughty old stock) staunch women
and promising children,
Founding a home in the South, where the 'wilder-
ing waste of the sea is.
Glitter of gold was the magnet that drew them thro'
doubt and thro' distance,
Far from the vale of the oak, and the historied land
of their sires.
Hope was their vessel, her sails were inclined to the
workers' intentions
To carve from the forest the fortune of toil and of
manifold hardships.
Wives of the practical love that shall follow a man
into thralldom,
Each based on an infinite faith in the other's unfail-
ing devotion.
(Love, with the colours of truth, like the perfected
arch of the rainbow.)

Children with ballastless minds, unlettered of care
and of danger,
Strong in the strength of affection, and great with
the hopes of the future.
Supreme was the passing of men and their all—
'mid the thunder loud-booming
Of the dolorous surf on the coast, and the startled
shriek of the sea-bird.

Sublime are the strength of a man and the love of
a dutiful woman !
Mated, they bear to the nation the fruits of adven-
turous courage :
Homes in strange lands, where the child of the
forest his natural haunt has ;
Wealth from the soil, and the wonderful strides
of industrial increase
Seen in the making of cities, the press, and the
populous markets ;
Ships on the ocean, the expedition of steam on the
railways.
Toiling, by night and by day, for the fortune that
hurries the human
From hard-vanquished height up to height of his
progress, and final perfection.
Ploughing the furrows of life, with the stress of
his strenuous living
Frosting his locks with the white of the coming of
Death in the winter
Till, at the issue of life—which is death—he will
say to the mourners :
“ Weep not for labour accomplished ; I have fol-
lowed my fathers before me.

Best have attempted and done (for better than best
there is nothing);
Now am I faint with the sun, and sigh for the cool
of the shadow.”

Slowly and surely were laid the foundation stones
of Australia :

Shaped with the tools of endeavour, and set in
cementings of hardship ;

Washed by the sweat of the men, and the tears of
women and children,

And strengthened by iron of kinship, and love, and
imperial prestige.

Ofttimes, thro' workmanship faulty, resetting ; and
often a crushing

Of joys blooming into fruition, and hopes scarcely
daring to blossom.

Often the builders were wrong, or at variance one
with the other ;

Fighting with favourite doctrines, and jealous of
rights and of limits.

Fashioning, breaking, and spoiling, yet ever the
structure slow-springing

Up from the plains of Right Purpose, and fronting
the mountains of Effort ;

Because, above fighter and builder, and strivings of
mutinous factions,

Watched the Great Master of Builders—the mea-
sureless vast Overseer ;

Watched while the fabric uprose, word by deed,
and attempt by attainment

Till, in the dawn of success, they wrote the first
chapter accomplished.

Fair was her face in the years of that beautiful
youth in the sunshine;
Bright with the dawn of the morning, and joyous
for trials surmounted,
All the great world stood amazed at this youth of
the marvellous promise,
Soft set in sapphire seas of the South, 'mid the
tempests nomadic.
Brave were her men, and her women fit mates of
her pioneer workers.
Her past was a tablet of gold, illumined with
hopes of her future.
On high, from the crown of her dome, unfurled the
flag of her spotless fulfilment.
Parliament sat in her halls, and shaped wise laws
for the masses.
Never was promise so glad in the womb of her
covenant future,
Big with the hopes of a nation, and pregnant with
wonderful increase.
Cross of the south jewelled her night : betrothal of
bride that was coming
Out of the crucible's heat, like the wife won from
sorrow and grieving.
Far down the arcade of years resounded the prayer
of the builders :—
“ Follow on, workers, and show to the world a
sublimier Australia ! ”

THE SONG OF GOLD.

Sonorous the song of gold where the weird marsupial leapt ;

Transformed are the forest vistas — sun-kist and tempest-swept.

The pick of the sturdy miner is the text of the drama staged,

And its plot is the paltry dross by which the worth of a man is gauged.

Upspringing from grass-swathed valley, and breast of the ranges stern—

Where erst the wail of the lyre-bird uprang from the fretted fern—

Where the tangled growth of the forest enmargined the mantled creek,

The snow-white tents of a people who had come o'er the seas to seek.

From tent to town, then the city ; the palace and cloud-wrapt spire ;

The ships in the pulsing harbours ; the quick electric wire ;

The making of laws for the people ; the need for a brotherhood ;

The welding a stock supreme and strong—elect from the English brood.

Then came the fitting chapter : the pride of a people whole

In the strength of their new-born nation by the seas of the southern pole ;

'Mid the song and the shout triumphant where the
nations congregate,
The prayer to the God Jehovah—"Be with us, we
federate!"

THE FUTURE.

'Mid slumber scenes of glory I dreamed a splendid
dream;
I heard the sland'rer's story, I saw the plotter's
scheme;
A thousand voiceless voicings forth shrieked a
thousand lies:
The envious rejoicings of rabid enemies.

And thro' my sombre dreaming I viewed the
Spectre Drought;
His awful eyes agleaming, his form wrapt 'round
about
With hopes of brave men fighting beneath his
hellish breath;
Upon his forehead, blighting, the diadem of Death.

Then as I lived I thought me I threw each doubt
behind;
And as I lived they fought me in fears of ev'ry
kind;
But conflict only strengthened the hope-supported
soul,
Yet time their columns lengthened, from pole to
utmost pole.

But ever on, victorious!—and ever trusting I
Ere long my fighters glorious would gain the
mastery.

And e'er as I thus trusted, the face of grim Des-
pair—

Sin-fraught and passion-lusted—would tremble into
air.

And when the faintest dawning swept soft 'cross
land and sea;

And when the fullest morning breathed bolder
thoughts to me;

Then did all doubts and weariness—with the dark
King Despair—

Swift vanish with Night's dreariness, for Day's
fond Hope was there.

Lulled by the laughing sunlight, sleep's curtains
were unfurled:

I heard the wheels of midnight crash thund'ring
from the world;

I saw grim-visaged Failure creep shudd'ring to the
night,

And heard "ADVANCE AUSTRALIA" from choirs in-
finite!

THE MAN.

We of the morning life, born amid pains
Of pioneering; patient building-up
Of fabrics economic, social, vast
Momentous edifices; in the dull
Sad days of spiritual depression
Are wont to woo despair—deny the worth
Of strenuous living.

Thus it ever is :
The austere labour of the pioneer
Demands his soul and body, leaving nought
To soft enjoyment of the finer parts
Of life. Ere long the fabric, slow uprising,
Admits of leisure, when the wearied mind
Reverts to high pursuits; the soul's reaction
Encompasses the nobler elements
Of mental pride; and life to such an one
Appears resplendent with capacities
Lofty and lasting as Eternity.

We of the southern land, born amid sun,
And pulsing life, and eager tropic warmth
Belong not to despair; rather to hope
Tumultuous, full, pregnant with higher thoughts
And splendid powers. To us life is as clay
To fashion as we will, and deftly mould
To the vast pattern of our destiny.

There are few futures like to ours. Within
The heart of our young Commonwealth there lies
The germ of mighty greatness; it awaits

The great, strong Man to come; and when he
speaks

See how the huge inert young giant stirs;
List how he answers to his Saviour's voice.

THE AWAKENING.

I can hear the forges roaring and the hammers'
measured beating;

Clanging, crashing thro' the darkness like a
weird, wild dream of hate.

I can mark the kiss of fires on the midnight va-
pors, fleeting

From before the mutt'ring storm-winds—mad
and inarticulate.

O the chanting of the workers! songs of war and
women's tears,

As they come and go like shadows from the dark-
ness to the light;

O the building of the vessels, framed of love and
human fears

By Australians for Australians, who are girding
for the fight.

Far away 'round midnight camp-fires weary forms
are stretched in slumber:

Stalwart youths of stern endeavour; ever march-
ing, marching forth

To defend their homes and dear ones from the foe
who, vast in number,

Mad with hate and fierce with lusting, creep like
ghouls from out the north.

Great Australia ! She is wakened from her slumbers ; she is arming

For the call to noble effort ; for the joy of splendid deed.

From the forge and from the workshop ; from the sporting and the farming,

She has called her children 'round her in her hour of dreadful need.

As I view the august vision, come to me soft-speaking voices

Breathing of a golden future when our youth shall cast his shame ;

Stand as gods stand, nobly scorning any traitor that rejoices

In the slander of his country, the abasement of her name.

With our feet on rungs of greatness, we shall cast dishonour from us ;

Set our face toward suns of glory, with our foreheads all alight

With the splendour of the god-like : we shall stand and we shall promise

To be ready for the call—to keep AUSTRALIA FOR THE WHITE !

WAR.

Up, up, Australians, shout aloud
Our war-song of the free.
Be brave in war; in peace be proud
Of our great liberty.
With sounding tones of valour fill
The cloud-swept halls of night;
Shout over gum-clad vale and hill—
“AUSTRALIA AND THE RIGHT!”

Wave Austral's standard to the skies,
Its stars imperious toss.
The flag shall be our nation's guise;
Where duty calls, there shall arise
Australia's starry cross.

Let lands where bows the bonded slave,
The sycophant and fool,
Sink 'neath the power of princely knave,
Where subtle despots rule.
Australia scorns the tyrant's thrall;
We'll raise our standard high,
Nor let it droop, nor let it fall—
Tho' fighting, heroes die.

From tropic Queensland's tracts of wealth;
From sea-washed Tasman's isle;
From where the Yarra creeps by stealth
By many a splendid mile;
From far-west mines of golden dream;
From Sydney's lovely shore;
And by the Southern Torrens stream—
Australians come to war.

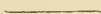
We'll hold Australia for the White.
Sweet peace we all approve—
But when the bugle calls to fight
For worth and women's love,
We'll set our face toward the foe,
And scorn to bend the knee.
We'll let all God's creation know
We come of fighting blood and breath;
We'll shout our war-song to the death—
“AUSTRALIA FOR THE FREE!”

PEACE.

Based on adamant relentless, rooted in her heroes'
graves,
Can I see my country's future by the long Pacific
waves
As a statue in the sunshine, with the plinth en-
twined around
With soft cereal growths and figures of the beasts;
the brow profound
Bears a diadem of diamonds from her mines; the
strong right hand
Holds aloft our starry flag; the lips are set in stern
command
To be up and doing great things—making, mould-
ing, fashioning
Deeds of splendour, deeds creative, deeds of which
rare poets sing:

Stepping-stones to heights of glory where, in rarer
atmosphere,
We may read the truth of living; cease to cavil;
be not mere
Faction-servers, trifle-hunters, fools who mouth of
rights and wrongs,
While a frightened world waits wond'ring at our foe-
men's battle songs.
See, beneath her feet she treads all bonds, and
breaks the bloody sword,
For around my splendid statue are the awful arms
of God.

WAITING.



Set in the lonely wash of southern seas
She stands and waits, all timorous, the time
When the fierce whisperings shall have become
The scream of senseless war. As the doomed wretch
Doth bare his shrinking neck, and with a sigh
Gives tithe to death, so must she, apeing yet
Pitiful semblance of a warlike wrath
With little toys for tools, give nod to Fate,
And set her silly travesty to rights.
A PRIZE FOR WHO COMES FIRST:—and what a
prize!

Her empty places pierce, like a great wound,
Her heart; while 'round her fringe of coast
Her people fight, and strut, and waste fair time
In tinkling platitudes and paltry sport.
Contentious children, with no shudd'ring fear
Of what the morrow means, so that to-day
Be fair, and bright, and prodigal of joy.
Would we had had to fight for what we have!—
We would be better patriots; would rank
Our country higher than to let her stand
Sport for the butchers; would with a wild dread
Learn what our women-folk will have become
Ere the sun sets upon that shameful day
When hell crowds 'round.

O, must it then be so?

Is there no Man to guide our halting steps
Thro' the red labyrinths of what will be
Toward the light? Must we become the fools
Of alien princes? Else, ere yet too late,
Summon the bloody thoughts of centuries
Of splendid conquests to our halting aid,
And, shoulder to shoulder, State to sister State,
All wrongs forgotten, set our faces toward
The honour of a white humanity?

WARNINGS.

As a hand on the wall; as a bell in the night;
As a touch on the heart when the soul is affright;
Like some grim, horrid shape that is born of a crime
And beckons the spirit to hell for all time;
Like blood-thoughts that throng, all afire, to a brain
That trembles unbalanced in passions of pain;—
So come, in the night-watch, dread whispers of
warning,
Telling of death with the dew of the morning.

Eastward fair cities sleep under the moon;
(What might they be when the day cometh soon?)
Westward the stampers sing anthems of gold;
(What will they sing when the fires are a-cold?)
North to the pearl-beds, and south to the isle,
Night with a tender and tremulous smile
Watches full lovingly—Mother of years!—
Aye, but my brain is awake with its fears.

See how the cloud-worlds close up from the north:
Vaporish armies of foes, coming forth
Mad with the lust of the races; the wind
Whispers of manifold terrors behind.
Oh, I could weep for the morrow to be:—
Weep for the mists creeping over the sea;
Weep for sweet women-folk, soft as a dove;
Weep for my country, the land that I love.

Up!—'tis a dream! See, the glad morning breaks.
Time still hath pity, and Providence takes
Count of our pray'rs but, stern seeming as Fate,
Points to the slow, stealthy hand at our gate.
Up with the sunrise, the night fades away,
Now to the work, and to hell with the play!
Sure as the great God of Battles sits high,
So sets the planet of peace in our sky.

A nation to have and a nation to hold:
Ribbed with fair riches, and girded with gold;
Children's soft fingers and innocent lives;
Virtue of sweethearts; and honour of wives.
God!—was there ever so worthy a stake?
Ever such future, to mar or to make?
There shall be fighting and there shall be weeping;
The night is gone by, and there's no time for
sleeping.

Down with the schemers, and liars, and fools:
Out on the loafers, with workers for tools;
Way for the youth with the arrogant brow—
Room for the newer Australia now!
Faces of flint, aye, and hearts of the same;
Strong for the sacrifice, grim for the game.
Firesides behind us and foemen before us;
"AUSTRALIA" the war-cry, and "LOVE" for the
chorus!

THE COMING.



Where the southern winds are born amid the far
Antarctic snows,
And the tempests clamour landward, where the
trader comes and goes;
Where the white-topt waves roll crashing fierce from
Leeuwin 'cross the Bight,
And the crying of the curlew sends a shudder thro'
the night.—

There Australia lies sublime :
Her illimitable shore
All-enclosing ;
Soft reposing
'Mid the distances imposing ; stretcht to silence
evermore
From the dawning-hour of time.

There a race of later Britons claim a mighty heri-
tage
From the long-forgotten heroes,—men who wrote
the title-page ;
Fought and vanquished stubborn forests ; built the
harbour and the mart ;
Slaved the winds and caught the rivers :—made of
Nature nobler Art.

But alas ! their offspring trend
To a paltry commonplace ;
Fain to borrow
For the morrow
Joy of life and nought of sorrow :—all the pity
and disgrace
Of a nation at its end.

Vapid mouthings are their language—O the giggle
and the grin !
And the scarcely-hid acceptance of the deathly moral
sin.
O the leprous lie of living !—bred from wickedness
effete,
Where before was simple courage and the toil of
savour sweet.
Where their sturdy fathers fought
Goat-faced idlers stand agape :
Thousands streaming ;
Eyes lust-gleaming ;
Voices cracked with witless screaming :—fore-
heads running to the ape
With the worship of their sport.

Do they hear that knocking, knocking at the gate
where north-winds come ?
Do they see that creeping, creeping of the vile hands
nearer home ?
Do they scent the fetid breathing of the alien, as
he crawls
From the shadows of the stillness to their stately
city halls ?

Do they need the cannon's roar?
Must their fiercely flaming streets
Light their vision
To the mission
Of the foe who, in derision, brings in horrid
might his fleets
To their widely-open door?

Are we ready for the summons when the brave
brown ranks fall in,
Marching down to dire destruction in the fight
where numbers win?
Can we hear the eager treading of our youth with
shout and song?
O the pity of their slaughter! O the cruel, senseless
wrong!

Golden hours did we seize
But for sweets of lover's pain:
Pregnant chances
'Mid the dances;—
'Tween hot whispers, and the glances of soft
women,—at the wane
Of numb senseless nights of ease.

For a Britain hedged with nations clutching at her
gasping throat
Shall have scanty time for nursing all those spots
of red remote:
Ev'ry spot a fatal weakness,—she shall stand at
splendid bay,
All her thund'ring fleets locked landward on each
blood-hued water-way.

She shall find her not a friend
In the sorry days to be.
Each death rattle
Of the battle
'Tween the lust-lit human cattle shall tick out
Eternity
To her grim and awful end.

In those days of blazing cities,—of our sad, colossal
shame,
When, 'tween yellow talon fingers, we are pawns
within the game;
Shall our paltry whining statesmen cease their
bicker and their hate,
And unite in common reason ere the guns scream
forth :—"TOO LATE?"
Shall the tears of crying States
Herald deeper tones of fear
At the dawning
Of that morning
When shall toll the knell of warning as the
fierce-faced foes appear
Like a nightmare at our gates?

In those days of rape and ravish—when dark Asia's
helots wage
Bestial struggle for our beauty, and the unclean
passions rage
'Tween the coloured and the white man—ever foes
beneath it all,
Shall our silly sportsmen waken to the awful bugle-
call?

Or shall still they scream the odds
As the stricken stallion sweats
For their pleasure,—
Till their leisure
Shall give place to war's grim measure, when
their gambles and their bets
Shall be wagered with the gods?

Let us stand to save Australia!—Let us teach the
growing youth
Worth of strife and keen endeavour, and the holy
sweets of truth!
Let us strip the tinsel from us!—stand as men, and
give the lie
To a sneering world of critics, all alert to see us
die!

Then when once the knocking comes
We shall stand as one again :
Spring like yeomen
At the foemen

And, as fought the ancient Roman, we shall
fight with might and main
For our altars and our homes.

SONG OF THE WAR TO COME.

Sing me a song of the war to come; and tune your
lay to the clash of arms;
And strip yourselves of the shams of life; and turn
your face from soft women's charms.
The time is come to be men—and gods. Ye will
need the best of your grand white blood
Would ye save your slumb'ring Commonwealth,
and stem the tide of the northern flood.

And let your song be a battle-song: with never a
note of sweet, soft love.
Train your heart to its fiercest hate, and set your
face to the flag above;
Face afire with the lust of rage, and eyes agleam
with a racial scorn,—
And throbbing thoughts for the home and mate,
and the quick'ning life of the babe unborn.

See how the north skies darken low; and the north
seas churn 'neath a hundred keels
Of the fierce-faced mob of a mad Japan—with a
docile China at her heels.
Hark to his guns at your northern gate:—"He is
come! He is come!" Ye have tarried long
In deathly dalliance with chance, and paltry play
with the brainless throng.

So sing a song of a dreadful day when the guns
shall burst to the break of dawn;
And your days of mad forgetfulness shall flee in
fright from a bloody morn.
And what shall your song be, singers, then, but a
dirge of the death of your fathers' faiths:—
A fun'ral march of your nationhood in sad proces-
sion of weeping wraiths?

“He is come!” Ye may fling your baby strength
in vain 'neath the tread of his mighty march.
Your palace home is your honor's pyre; your city
gate is his triumph arch.
Ye have lost the chance of a million years! Ye
may read the truth—if your dwarfed sight can :
“ *Ye have made a god of your silly sport!—a slave
of your sad-faced thinking man!*”

WANTED—A LEADER !

'Tis said that a country never cries
For a great strong soul, and a leader's brain :
A hand for the reins and an eye for the prize—
That a country never calls in vain.

Some say, that as ever the people need
The play of a perfect Master Will
That the Man is there—for the splendid deed :
Be he there to preach, or to pray, or kill.

And 'tis said if he be the one true Man,
He comes with a Singer of people's songs :
Singer with noble brow and wan
With grief for his loved people's wrongs.

And together they set their country free
From the gloom of greed, and the night of hate.
Singing, and doing, till all may see
The morning sun at the nation's gate.

O where is Australia's Man to-day ?
Shall we longer grope ?—must we ever weep
For the stirring song, and the leader's sway
To 'rouse us all from our fatal sleep ?

We have called for long—we are sore afraid
Of the unknown foes in the years to be.
We are sick at heart of the fools' parade :
Servers all for an ill-earned fee.

WANTED—A MAN !—And the right man too.
O, how we'd love him and serve him well !
Follow and fear him the great world through—
Follow him down to the gates of hell.

O where'er you be, if you be at all,
Fighter, or singer, cast off your sleep ;
Get up in front with the bugle-call
Where our strong men curse, and our women
weep.

For we play with fire ; and we court the rage
Of the foes where the battle-flames are lit ;
And we've scarcely written a single page
Of our wondrous tale, as it should be writ.

So do us a deed, or sing us a song.
We are ripe for you, and we tire of nought ;
Of broken pledges and paltry wrong,
And of men who are bought as are women
bought.

A CONTINENT FOR A WHOLE RACE HERE !
A people brave as the best are brave ,
An earnest youth without coward fear ;
A nation—ready to sink, or save.

Be sure we shall know you, fighter grim ;
Be sure we shall hear you, singer rare ;—
We shall set your deeds to a battle-hymn ;
We shall sing your songs as a battle-prayer.

Away with our playthings ; our silly sport ;
Schemers and fools and our empty days !
Make room for the Singer of noble thought ;
A cheer for the Leader who knows the ways !

THE TRAITOR.

Who is this man with narrow forehead; he
All steeped in words, and wrapt with prejudice
Till scarce the true man may be seen; his face
Soured with disappointments, and his eyes
Cast on the ground about him? He the traitor!
Betrayed of my country and her future;
Babbler of platitudes and party cries
Like wrangling children's spite! His furtive
gaze

Marks not the splendid years before: content
To look behind, he quibbles over ghosts
Of his own mad imagining; and things
As mean and paltry as his little soul.
His voice ascends no higher than his world
Where gaping rustics cheer him; where his press
Rake up his filth to satiate the fools
Who hang upon his words.

O for a tongue
To speak the hate Australia has for such
As thus betray her! to shout aloud the scorn
For fools and traitors, and to tell the world
We are not all as such: for those we have
Great as their sires who scorned the littleness
Of life, and lived alone for greatness. Then

Contented be, and send them to the hell
They sprang from, and applaud those worthy
 sons
Whose feet are set on rungs of truth, toward
 where
We see, shining amid the gloom, a little star—
The soft, sweet love-light of our destiny.

WHEN WE ALL SHALL BE AUSTRALIANS.

When we're standin' all together where th' bullets
scream along;
When we're marchin', marchin', marchin' all tn'
night, with sob 'n' song:
Crushin' knapsacks on our shoulders, bleedin' feet,
'n' fain t' fall—
Then no more o' this 'n' that 'n' them—we'll be
AUSTRALIANS ALL!

Yes, at last we'll 'ave a fellowship 'tween State 'n'
sister State:
Fellowship of earnest fighters, girdin' up our nor-
thern gate.
Lot we'll care f'r party squabbles, rights o' States,
'n' bound'ries curst;
F'r instead o' this 'n' that 'twill be "AUSTRALIA—
LAST AND FIRST!"

'N' we'll never think o' football when th' guns
begin t' speak;
'N' we'll wish we'd joined th' Rifles when th' little
bullets squeak.
'N' th' surf-brown boys o' Coogee 'n' th' lads from
Melbourne way
'Ll be pals, 'n' friends, 'n' brothers, on that black
'n' bloody day.

'N' when a pal is stricken down t' death, d'y' think
we'll stop

First to ask 'im is 'e this or that, 'n' where 'e keeps
'is shop?

But we'll take 'is dyin' message f'r the sweetheart,
—nevermore

Carin' if she lives by Melbourne's stream or Syd-
ney's 'eav'nly shore,

'Cos we'll be AUSTRALIANS ALL—at last; one con-
tinent to keep;

One thought of 'ome 'n' kiddies where our broken
women weep.

'N' we'll shove the old State Frighters right in
front, 'n' get 'em shot;

'N' make 'em shriek "AUSTRALIA" as their souls
are goin' t' Pot.

WHEN THE BAD AUSTRALIAN DIES.

There's a better time a-comin' when our clouds 'ave
 rolled away;
 'N' we carn't 'ave long t' wait, boys, f'r th' comin'
 of th' day;
 F'r our night 'as been a long 'un—night o' tricks,
 'n' schemes, 'n' lies;
 But we'll scare the older nations when th' Bad Aus-
 tralian dies.

We 'ave stood 'im pretty well consid'rin' of our
 British pluck;
 'N' 'is mad 'n' empty ravin's; 'n' 'is rakin' of th'
 muck.
 But 'e's 'ad 'is day, me comrades, 'n' it's time we
 gripped our prize;
 F'r th' goal is straight afore us, now th' Bad Aus-
 tralian dies.

Let 'im die 'n' let 'im rot, boys, 'n' 'e'll rot quite
 fast enough
 With 'is bad 'n' bloated carcase, filled with ill-paid
 foreign stuff.
 Build our fact'ries on 'is graveyards; lift our smoke-
 stacks t' th' skies;—
 We are on'y jist commencin' when the Bad Aus-
 tralian dies.

O, we'll make the old world tremble in th' golden
days to be;

We're th' boshter comin' nation o' th' earth,
'tween you 'n' me.

F'r we're going t' build a nation where our starry
standard flies :

Goin' t' live our life in earnest when th' Bad Aus-
tralian dies.

IN MEMORIAM.

(South Africa, 1900.)

This is the song of Australia :
Not of her prosperous calm ;
Not of her midnight regalia—
Cross of the mariner's psalm ;
Not of her forest-lands yonder,—
Land of the ages before ;
Filled with the weird and the wonder—
This is the song of her war.

This is the terrible story
Born of her innermost heart ;
Writ in the blood of her glory,
Treats of her patriot part ;
Sings of her share with the others—
Those of a similar birth :
Mighty and glorious brothers,
Hearts of the hearts of an earth.

War is the test of a fire
Fashioned from valorous woe ;
Flamed from the food of a pyre
Built of the friend and the foe.

Courage the gold of the testing ;
Failure the dust and the dross :
Might of Gethsemane's wresting
Sprung from the blood of the cross.

O for the pen of the perished !
Dipt in the gall of a hell :
Worthy to write of the cherished ;
Write of the fighters that fell.
O for the mind of a master !
Mind that would bring us to weep—
Weep for the woes alabaster :
Woes of the shepherdless sheep.

Glory of tears for the gloried—
They that fought stoutly, and died ;
Monuments lettered and storied
Proving their perilous pride ;
Glory of tears for the left ones—
Glory of aid in their strife ;
Help for the lonely bereft ones
Fighting their battle of life.

Show them a smile for their weeping ;
Teach them the gain of their loss :
How the great hearts that are sleeping
Died like their Christ on the Cross.
Died for the home and the nation ;
Live for the martyr's reward—
Peace for the soul's tribulation ;
Rest in the glory of God.

POEMS
OF
AUSTRALIAN LIFE

THE PIONEER.

The bush had awaited his coming from the morn
of the mother-earth ;
The sun and the rain had prepared his place ere
yet he had come to birth ;
The trees had resigned their foliage to enrich th'
expectant soil ;
And wealth had come on the changing winds, and
strength with the storm's turmoil.

He came, and the powers of Nature stooped low to
their human lord ;
And the sounding tones of the forest clashed deep
in a master-chord.
From the depths of the vales to the mountains the
winds sighed low : " He is come !"
And the dormant forces aroused, converged, and
blent in a mortal's home.

But the hostile powers that ever hedge the birth of
a human soul,
And harass and thwart its splendid fight to the
front and the storm-set goal
Were there at his coming and—in the depths of the
bush where the sins breed hate—
They gathered their strength to a centre, and be-
came his remorseless Fate.

Two stars gleamed low in the west : one pale, the
other an awful red ;
From the latter a light leapt meteor-wise, and swift
with the darkness wed.
'Twas whispered weirdly, " The Soul hath sinned
in a stratum of life before,
And 'tis said : All sin must be recompensed, for
no man may evade the Law."

He came in the laughing spring-time, when the
scent of the wattle's gold
Seemed a song of the souls of flowers, to a tune
that the breezes told.
With a heart courageous to battle, and stalwart
arms for the fray,
While the world laughed glee at his efforts, and
shouted of holiday.

And he sang as he fought the forest, and his mate
re-echoed the song,
As she played her part in the home-life, in the joy
of affection strong.
At the eve of the day of toiling, o'er the table of
humble food
They chanted their adoration, and murmured that
God was good.

Thro' a summer of shining promise, with the gold
of the ripened grain
Like a limitless aureola, they laboured with might
and main.

Their life was a psalm of loving ; their loving a wondrous thing
That whispered their hearts the courage the pains
of the seasons bring.

And his face grew light with the dawning of wealth
and a prosp'rous ease ;
And his supple limbs as the sinews that circle the
forest trees.
His voice waxed rich with the music of magical
streams that sang
Thro' the depths of the forest mazes, where the
sound of his keen axe rang.

But dun autumn came, with its hours malodorous
with decay ;
And he saw the wrecks of his richest hopes float out
with the tide each day.
His snowy flocks fell cruelly down 'neath the sickle
of dread disease,
And to him it seemed a death-dirge formed the text
of the trackless breeze.

He craved of his God to spare him, but the curse
of an Adam fell
On this tiller of soil and founder of wealth from the
forest dell.
His wan wife sickened, and withered—and died ;
and was buried where
His hopes had for long been buried, in the depths
where the death-weeds stare.

In a winter of cruel trouble, when athwart the earth
a pall
Was flung from the breast of Heaven, and Death
loomed over all;
When the world seemed frozen to silence, and the
forest wept with the rain
He, weary with bitter wand'ring, came back to
his home again.

Dead hopes were about his shoulders; dead love
was a ghost behind;
Dead manhood and rebel moaning in the wail of
the western wind.
Wearily stretched he weeping on the grave with
the dead leaves drest
And, gath'ring the leaves about him, he passed to
the final test.

Full strange are the years of a man, but the love
of his life is strong.
Tho' oft in our childish groping our paths seem
sore and long
Yet we, with our mortal sight, see but the links of
a mighty chain
Which stretches from world to farthest world, and
back to our lives again.

Tho' the spring may be big with promise, and life
but a lay of joy;
Tho' the summer be rich in blessing, and love be
without alloy;

Tho' autumn be framed of sorrow, with Death
 crouched close to the earth—
The seed in the soil of winter shall spring to a
 greater birth.

Straight shall the stalk grow skyward, bred from
 the couch of death;
Golden the sun-kist cornsheaves, fashioned from
 failing breath;
Mighty the harvest reaping, rooted in buried hopes;
Joyous the grave's reaction on the breasts of the
 mountain slopes.

Working, and hoping, and weeping—yet ever we
 kiss the rod;
The seed that's sown in affliction shall spring from
 a richer sod:
For the pains of a father's falling the toils of his
 child shall bless,
And the rebuilt stones of a failure lead up to a late
 success.

LIFE AND DEATH.

The bush was fragrant at a late spring's eve ;
The heat still touched the trees ; the tinkling creek
Seemed but a speaking in the drowsy dreams
Of sleeping Nature. There—where fell the light
'Tween scented ti-tree and the river musk—
The pebbly creek-bed gleamed thro' golden depths
O'erhung with wattle, freighted with its wealth
Of saffron splendor. All the vast-aisled bush
Droned with its insect-life incredible.

There, where green mosses spread, and fairy things
things
Grew shyly, and the tiny violets—
Each rarely gemmed—enlaced the maiden-fern
O'ertopt with fretted undergrowth, beside
A giant chieftain of the forest race
Two lovers met, and plighted troth and vow
With gaze toward their golden future turned.

Heart wed to heart they spake their litany
Of love : what time their softly-whispered words
Glittered like gems upon one string of thought.
To him the world was slave ; the stress of life
A shuttlecock. To her all life was love—
And love to womankind is everything.

To both the past was blest for blessing them ;
The present but a breath ; the future life
A glad gold time of splendid holiday.

The day with strides too swift to fretful love
Stept stately to the dusk. The opal east
Grew pregnant with the amorous eve : a star
Was born and, trembling thro' the sombre halls
Of breathless space, seemed like a thought of God.
Fresh night-dews fell ; the bush distilled its soul
In fragrance of a thousand flowers which, glad,
Swept thro' the night, and met with spirit things
In concord with its wondrous ecstasy.

“Come, love,” spake he, “and sit on yonder
monarch,

And hold sweet counsel in our mutual love :
Bathing our souls in mellifluous moonlight.
Mark, love, the compact star-stream overhead,
Like pathway for the angels' journeying ;
Like silver rain from Heaven's awful vault ;
Or like a thread of fairest fairy lace
Flung 'cross black velvet by celestial hands ;
Like mighty finger-mark, drawn across space
By some vast Being ; or like to a breath
Breathed through and through the deathly still of
void

By God Himself, as mighty benison
Over the slumb'ring world ; or like a bridge
Arching the solemn, darksome nothingness
From system unto far mysterious system.
Mark, love, the plunging planets : circling worlds

Fashioned and framed by an All-Wise Creator,
And launched upon the fearfulness of space
T' expound and magnify His awful name—
That mortal fools might know there dwells a God
In the High Heaven, and quit their sceptic science.
The ice-confined moon, a frozen ghost
Of some mad passionate world of aeons gone;
The myriad things around us; Earth's great breast
Granting her mother-milk to ev'ry kind.
All shall decay in chaos, sweetest heart;—
But our pure love shall triumph, long outlast
Worlds, stars, and systems—it shall never die!"

* * * *

Slow the dread years of tragedy lagged on.
The man had nobly lived his life, and bore
The mournful sufferings of poverty;
Lit, tho', with love's great sun, and redolent
With the rare fragrance of a faithful wife.
He stands alone where they had met those days
When all the world was young. His frame is
bowed
To the hard yoke which comes with ceaseless toil
And languished hopes.

'Tis eve—but what an eve!
The land is pulsing in the throes of drought;
The sky is cruel with heat, that through the year
Has drained the blood from out the veins of life;
Has dried melodious waters to mere tracks
Of sluggish horror; slaughtered patient beasts
In nameless torments; and has touched the locks

Of young men with the hue of weary age
And coming death.

The naked eucalypts
Fold in their horrid arms his tragedy.
The west gleams redly—where an angry star,
Prescient with warning, fades, and sinks, and sets.

Lifting his arms, he asks the steaming night
The reason of his cruel Gethsemane.
Nought answers him, save but the dingo's howl
Where, in the forest depths, it scents a meal
And tells the hunger of a hunted day.
“O Christ!” he cries, “I fain would wed my soul
With the sad memory of Thy Calvary.
I fain would weep the tale of life and death.
Life is a dying state, since ev'ry hour
Doth draw us nearer death. All things around us
Do also die. We firstly sow the seed
In soil on which we've spent much saving trouble,
Then water it with tears wrung from the heart.
The plant appears, we foster it with care
And fond attention. How we mark its growth!
Ere yet the rose doth bloom, full many a thorn
Offends the eye, and incongruity
Bids fickle promise of a greater birth.
Yet as the bud evolves the brilliant bloom
Conceals the thorns, and what at first seemed rude
Bursts into splendour of the perfect flower
To please the eye, and elevate the mind.
Enraptured do we gaze upon its beauty
And stoop to pluck it. Even as we do
It withers, dies, and nought is left to us
But a dull travesty of horridness

That cumbereth the ground. Palace we build,
And cloud-kist spire, and glorious gilded dome
Vieing with God's sun for supremacy.
But e'en do these, while yet our children's lips
Are hushed within the everlasting grave,
Crumble to vast and visionary ruin;
Crash to the earth in corporal destruction,
And end their little lives. We mark the meteor
Flash swift across the sky,—like living fire
Its trail we trace 'tween stars and planet-worlds
Till darkness murders it, and we grope blind
In consequence of its brief brilliancy.
Like as the lightning flaming 'round the heavens
In transient marvel of a breathing-space;
The rainbow circling 'cross the firmament
Lives a short season, then is forfeited
As 'twere too sumptuous for man to see.
The very moon swings dead along her course:
A lost world, thund'ring down th' eternal slopes
As would a ghost upon a frightened gale.
Each life in Nature breathes its brief existence,
Then disappears,—why then should man be fa-
voured?
A creature born to doubt; must live to die;
His life a lie; his tenets suppositions:
A mad fierce questioning in the teeth of Fate.
His birth a tempting of the wanton Powers;
His life facsimile of thinkless beasts;
His death the epilogue; his Afterward
A horrid compact with the eager worm.
Poor human pigmies, crawling 'round the globe,
Their life a puzzle, end a coffin-robe!"

Then thro' the forest came a solemn sound
On wings of night, and 't seeméd as it were
The mournful washing of a lonely wave
Sighing and echoing from a vaulted tomb.
And then, like pulsing note of spirit organ
Breathing its soul thro' spectre channelings,
It seemed to him a distant earthless Voice
Did whisper low, as from the dark'ning sky—
Or rather, far above in highest Heaven—
Until it seeméd but a breath of sound
Like a lost wind among tall poplar trees—
Yet with the accent of his lost one's voice—
“*Man does the painful building, God the sweep-*
ing;

A lifetime's toil is wafted with a breath.
Man does the sowing, God th' eternal reaping,
And proves to man Soul's life, and Body's
death.’’

He knelt beside a grave, and trembling wrote
Upon a rough-hewn sapling cross—that stood
The finger-post to his Eternity—
This tribute of his soul; his sum of life—

“Our lives are links of one mysterious chain
Which we mark not till, with a greater sight,
My love and I shall pluck the flowers of Truth,
And learn the lesson of our parting here.”

A SONG OF DEMOCRACY.

On a day of low-set spirits, with the world's task
on my soul,
Forced by hate and cruel derision further backward
from the goal,
In a retrospective choler lived I thro' the day
again,—
Set in grim-hued sheen of battle, ringed with hours
of shameful pain ;
'Till, in pitiful dejection born of weariness, I wept
Women's tears of wounded trouble then, in prayer-
less mood, I slept.
Standing on the vapourish threshold of the unborn
century,
In a vision vast I witnessed things that *were*, and
are to be.

Backward flung upon the ages prostrate on the
mighty Past,
Saw I all the things that *had been*, to the depths of
Chaos cast :
All the shame and all the striving;—men aglow
with mutual hate ;
Schemers, thieves, iconoclasts, the robber and the
profligate ;

Workers fired with rage impotent, searching for
elusive good;
Wealth and power forever foremost, doling out the
people's food;
Genius sobbing back to slumber weary with the
scorn of fools;
Leaders hacking at the ages, with poor human
hearts for tools.

O the pity of my dreaming! O the sadness of
my heart!
As I viewed the huckster truckling of the world's
great human mart:
Saw the scheme of human living based on things
of worthless dross;
Saw the Good in life tormented, like the Christ
upon the Cross.
O for lethean draughts to drown it!—this remem-
brance of a sight
That extolled man's inmost evil, and established
it as right!
Gazing back along the vista I could see the years
unfurled,
Showing me the things that *had been*, from the
morning of the world.

'Twas a scene of splendid horror, cast in colours
murd'rous red;
Based on graves of buried goodness 'mid the great
dishonoured dead.
Where all life was but a System for the wealthy
hands to wield;

And the Church a monstrous Fable; and the Law
the rich man's shield.

Gleaming horrid thro' the glamour of men's
mighty quarrellings—

Thro' the smoke of belching cannon—saw I played
the Game of Kings.

Saw the soft face of the human all aflame with
bestial rage,

And the story of the nations written on a bloody
page.

O'er the scene was cast a darkness like the darkness
of a pall;

Sin and Evil ruled the heavens—held men's souls
in direst thrall;

Crime stalked knee-deep 'mongst the nations,
splashed with women's frenzied tears;

Weighted with men's curses, sounding down the
arcade of the years.

Virtue was at market prices, to be labelled, bought,
and sold

By the one huge moral standard—by the great im-
perious Gold.

Satan gloried at the grossness, turned his gaze
upon the earth;

And inscribed His awful mint-mark on the infant
at its birth.

“Where is God?” I asked the darkness; and
along the dim arcade

Came the empty mocking answer—“God is Gold,
and Christ is Trade!

For the shameless world is shackled with its own
tremendous sins;
And what good is left to mortals ends, reproached,
where it begins."
With the chill of death about me, on my lips a
trembling prayer,
Turned I till I faced the Eastward—when my soul
became aware
Of a softly-sweet refulgence spreading o'er the years
afar;
Till I saw, within my dream, the rising of a splen-
did star.

O'er the pregnant womb of ages yet to spring
from out the Nought,
Flings the promise of the Future all our southern
sky athwart;
Till, by light of future suns, I seem in ecstasy to
see,
Set in elements of peace, the wondrous things that
are to be:
See soft blessings spring from war-blood; Good
from Evil's discontent,
And from politic corruption a sublimer Parliament;
See the lifting of our masses to a higher, nobler
Good,
And the welding of mankind into one mighty
brotherhood.

O the glamour of my dreaming! Oh the won-
der of that sky
Flamed with trailing clouds of splendour, lit by
fires of destiny!

And within my marvellous vision I can see men's
faces turn,
Firm with faith, toward their Future, while their
hearts this secret learn :—
“ Out of suff’ring cometh peace; and from the
fading womb of death
Springs the splendid life, resurgent with the dying
parent’s breath.
God is wise, and men are foolish, and Australia’s
future days
Shall be set in lustrous jewels, with the fires of
truth ablaze.”

Sinking on my knees in rapture, as the visions
pass away
With the coming of the morning of another modern
day,
This I learn within my praying, and it forms our
Future’s song—
“ God is great, and Time and Season are His tools
to right the wrong :
Those who strongest fight shall triumph; those
who suffer sorest pain
Shall be rich in rarest blessing when the Christ
Man comes again.
And that Christ’s name shall be UNION, in those
wondrous days to be,
And His crown men’s loyal alliance in the NEW
DEMOCRACY.”

'EROES.

Yes, we've 'eroes in Orstralia; y' c'n lift y'r English
nose;
Tell o' bloody fields o' battle on which English
hist'ry rose.
No, we've 'ad no fights t' speak of—bin too busy;
'ad no time
T' spare slittin' brothers' throttles in a sorter glory-
crime.

Where's our 'eroes? Well, they're many—guess
y'll find 'em, if y' look :
Not on paintin's in th' gall'ries; nor their names in
any book.
'E's a modest sorter feller is our local 'ero, sir,—
Does 'is dooty without skitin', gives 'is life without
a stir.

Grow a beard 'n' 'ump y'r bluey; give y'r gloves
'n' eyeglass best :
Might git broke if y' go trampin' out past Dubbo
t' th' west.

It is called th' Golden Fleece-Land, 'n' it breeds big
men o' work
As it breeds th' best of wool, sir, up th' Darling way
t' Bourke.

If y' cannot find 'im there, then set y'r English face
out back
Westward o' th' river Darling,—'long th' blazin'
swaggy track.
Git a grip on life 'n' livin', better learn to say a
prayer.
If y' reach th' Never-never, bet our 'ero's waitin'
there.

Pace th' wool-teams past Wilcannia, where our 'ero
battles thro'
Dust, 'n' flies, 'n' drought, 'n' 'ell-fire, 'round
about th' Old Paroo.
Big 'n' brown 'n' twice a sinner, chronic broke, 'n'
fond o' beer—
Pilin' up 'is cheque already f'r th' Cup again nex'
year.

Guess y'll find 'im there in plenty—simple 'eroes,
ev'ry one
Toilin', sweatin', where th' camels wobble down
from Barrington.
Knowin' nought of English 'ist'ry—carin' less of
English blood;
Fightin' fire 'n' drought in summer, 'n' in winter
—fightin' flood.

Pace the patient homeless plodders 'long the tired
Castlereagh;
Meet th' roarin' shearers trekin'; 'ear what women
'ave t' say
Toilin' in th' Mallee backblocks; take a 'and's turn
at th' plough;
Mark th' little Gippsland kiddies—spellin' GAWD
th' same as Cow.

'Ave a go out Broken 'Ill way, where th' miner's
soul is bound
T' th' fates 'n' fiends o' fortune, in th' black death
underground.
Where smug Moneybags is fatt'nin' on th' sweat-
blood of 'is fools—
Hackin' millions fr'm th' bedrock, with poor 'uman
'earts f'r tools.

Try y'r luck at Cobar copper, or th' White Cliffs
opal 'oles.
Go to Broome 'n' school th' niggers 'ow t' dive; or
dig f'r coals
'Mid th' smoke 'n' grime o' Lithgow; try tobacco
Texas way—
With a spell at sugar-cuttin' thro' th' long, 'ot
Queensland day.

'Ave a quiz f'r gold 'n' silver in th' burnt-up Bar-
rier Range;
'E'll be there to 'elp 'n' cheer you—if y' aren't shy
'n' strange;

F'r 'e' 'ates all blow 'n' bunkum, 'n' 'e loves a
man t' fight,
Curse, 'n' drink, 'n' play th' savage—but 'e fills
'is place alright.

They are there where'er y' go, sir, unnamed 'eroes,
black with sin :
Bringin' springers 'long th' Richmond, wheat fr'm
far Condobolin ;
Growin' wines where flows th' 'Unter—thirstin' in
th' Golden West ;
Never askin' f'r th reason, never wond'rin' which
is best.

Speak th' lonely pupil teacher rustin' in 'is hut o'
slats ;
Pass th' time o' day to settlers ticklin' up the Ren-
mark flats ;
Meet th' bound'ry rider circlin' wealthy lands o'
forest kings ;
Greet th' 'ardy line-repairers up near distant Alice
Springs.

Careful 'ow y' treat our 'ero ; meet 'im fair, 'e'll
stand y'r friend ;
Patronise, 'e'll scorn y'r pity ; pull 'is leg, 'n'
there's th' end.
Talk o' blood, 'n' race, 'n' prestige, 'e'll jist 'itch
th' old brown moles ;
Tuck 'is shirt all full of patches as 'is 'at is full of
'oles.

So git out 'n' find our 'eroes—not on bloody fields
o' war;
No brass bands 'n' bloomin' limelight, prancin'
steeds 'n' cannons' roar;
But 'e's fightin' battles always, 'n' 'e wants no
pomp 'n' place;
F'r 'e's jist a little 'ero buildin' up a little race.

A SONG IN TIME OF DROUGHT.

The land of the people pulsing in a pitiless fever-
heat;

The sun of a torrid summer in a terrible blinding-
sheet;

The hopes of the hearts courageous grant toll to
a Master Fate,

And the brutes of the field surrender to a Death
insatiate.

From the waste of the wooded ranges, where the
sapless forests faint;

From the scorching vales, where the shepherd turns
deaf to his flock's complaint;

From the creek, where the stagnant fevers the joys
of a last hope flout—

Uprising the Poem threnetic : the pæan of the fatal
Drought.

Thro' the day of the dallying hours the sky is a
dome of brass

Athwart whose shimmering vastness no vapourish
shadows pass;

Thro' the night of the niggard darkness no dew falls
soft to the glen,

And the gloom of a sombre glory encircles the lives
of men.

Vain eyes are cast to the heavens; vain prayers
are sobbed to the God;

Vain toil is bravely wasted on the burnt and the
barren sod.

The plough is left in the furrow; the beasts have
died where they fell,

And the fearless heart of the farmer is seared with
the bitter hell.

On the dusty track, where the bed-rock gleams with
the quest of a million hoofs,

The taint of a thousand bodies to death gives a
thousand proofs;

At the burnt-up dam, where had ended the rage of
a deadly race,

The breath of a nameless Horror debases the awful
place.

Black wings waft a shrieking chorus: from the lack
of a season's fast

Black beaks rend a horrid plenty in the joy of a
death-repast.

The Spirit of Desolation descends on the ruined
land,

And the curse of a chast'ning fury drops down from
Jehovah's hand.

The days depart in the shadow—monotonous—one
by one

They measure a daily anguish by the rising and
setting sun;

The hope of a sturdy people turns sick at the stern
delay,

As they curse the need of a morrow, and bless the
eve of a day.

Anon the breath of a promise breathes hope to the
fainting heart,
But the wanton winds shriek triumph as the truant
clouds depart.
Hope dies, and Despair comes sullen, whilst pulsing
the night throughout
Re-echoes the funeral anthem—the Song of the
Spectre Drought.

O ye in the halls of power, who move the helm of
the State,
Who make the laws for the masses, in the speech
and the swift debate—
Ye have a mission to follow : a chapter of gold to
write
On a page that is smirched with failure, and fouled
with a paltry spite.
They flouted the wealth of Nature : they trifled
with quarrel and strife
While a whole land sickened and withered, and
men cursed God for their life.
From out of their worthless wreckage your privi-
lege appears.
On a basement of foiled desires, cemented by
strong men's tears.

How long will you flout your power, with the law
for your bagatelle,
Whilst your country dies to its tap-root, and your
people wither in hell?
O, cease your pitiful striving, and seize like giants
grand
On the neck of your vast occasions, and be done
with your toys of sand.

Ye strut for the great press organs, and flaunt your
paltry sway
Whilst the future is prostituted, with a debit for
ev'ry day
On a ledger of languished fortunes—writ in ink of
the people's blood—
By the hands that should frame and fashion the
base of a brotherhood.

Make laws for our mighty rivers; frame acts that
will turn their flow
In ladders of life to the hilltops, and floods to the
vales below.
Pass motion and resolution that shall steal from the
greedy sea
A tithe of its mighty plunder for the good of pos-
terity.
And the dawn shall be bright with plenty in the
light of the laughing day,
And the fears of a frenzied people with the midnight
shall fade away.
The corridor of the future will ring with a joyous
shout,
As to regions of death and darkness glides, baffled,
the Spectre Drought.

THE DESERT.

A ghostly gray land, habited by shapes
Unholily uncouth, with weird wild cries
Remembrant of the morning of the world.
Most horrid clad with pale, gaunt eucalypt
Standing like stricken sentinels, their arms
Giant and poulpe-like, clutching the atmosphere
With thin and ragged grimness, like to shapes
Smitten to alabaster 'mid their sins.
Their scanty foliage trifling with the wind
In solemn monotone, as would the sighs
Of desolate spirits lost, and agonised,
Moaning their adamantine misery.
Frightful in sombre solitude, it stands
A ghostly symbol of Eternity.

The moon in nightly sovereignty begets
Weird shadows, trembling in their horridness;
Narcissus-like, her light reflects itself
In the dull waters of a reed-fringed swamp
Sluggish and sleeping, mantled with a scum
Of murderous crimes enacted in its depths :
Like the last froth of death that flecks a face

Strangled in warm blood, while the joy's i' th'
heart.

Across the frozen glory of her glow
Huge night-birds spectral flap, and feathered bats
Wing noiseless flight, anon to disappear
Into th' abysmal depths of dunnest shade.
Strange creatures,—and most fitly denizens
Of strangest land that e'er bred mystery.

Here, of a night of calm, the natives say
A cry, that chills the very blood o' th' heart
Is oft-times heard, and whisper frightedly
Of most unearthly shape, with countenance
Supremely horrible, and scaly serpent length
Resting amid the swampy noisomeness;
Emitting wails and shrieks, interpreted
To mean a death, at which repulsive sound
They tremble, and most earnest beg a grave
That will permit the soul's felicity.*
Then hearkening to the wonder, whisper low
Of ghosts and demons in the darksome shades
Where, at their vagrant home, they nightly hold
Vociferous revel and corroborree.

Along the creek, bearded with virulent growth
Of weeds and nettles, over which the fern
Waves emerald fairy-work, the mopoke's chant
Resounds monotonous; the laughing bird

*According to the belief of the Australian aborigines, felicity after death depends upon proper burial. A man dying in battle, or rotting in the field, becomes an evil spirit.

Makes echo with his weird hilarity;
The bark of fox, scenting a morning meal;
The snarl and answer of the tree opossums;
The buzz of beetle, and the solemn croak
Of reptile habiting its natal slime;
Incongruous forms, most disproportionate
In length and shape of limb, with pouchéd young
Peering upon the world in wonderment:—
All so unreal, it seemeth as a dream
Of genius painting its despondency.

A land of sad storm thoughts; of images
O' the soul tempest; pictures so passionate;
Delineating man's desire to die
And learn the lesson of Eternity.
A land of grim, gray language, beautiful
To those aweary of the world; of life
But yet half-life, as tho', forsooth, Creation
Had wantoned, and had parodied her powers,
Mayhap to teach a lesson yet untaught.
Food to the soul, its horrid grandeur stares,
Ghastly and desolate, adown the years
From dim creation's dawning, as tho' God
Had placed on it the brand of punishment,
And left it living for redemption.

A PSALM OF SPLENDID AUTUMN.

Nature is mourning for the Spring, and wears
Sack-cloth and ashes for the merry months
Of birds, and song, and laughter : all the joy
Of seed-time in the garb of holiday.
Moody she stares, as would an old man sad
With memories of youth, 'tween toothless gums
Mumbling remembrance of his escapades.
Thro' the bare forest pass the shudd'ring winds
Of Autumn's splendid misery, my heart
Sounding a dismal echo, as the chill
Of coming Winter breathes upon the earth
Her snow-breath—like a pall on happiness.

Across the face of Nature is a frown
Of gloomy beauty, and th' tears i' th' eyes
Unutterably sad—while her lag steps
Trail slowly to the dawn, when transient smiles—
Mocking her heavy heart—make travesty
Of day, which hastes toward its evening
As tho' 'twere loth to light her weariness.
Leaves droop and die, wrapping the chilly earth
In a brown shroud, and flowers scarcely live.
Malodorous with decay, the atmosphere
Clings to my lips, until my fearful soul
Prays penance for its sins, and ponders death.

I lose my mind in reverie : sad thoughts
Crowd one upon the other, like grim ghosts
Of hopes and pleasures and the loves I've loved
I' th' dead, buried Past. Th' autumnal chill
Enters my heart until I, timorous
With throbs of melancholic ecstasy—
Known but to souls in touch with finer things—
Cry like an infant in a darkened room
For the enfolding of a master hand
To lead the way; the whisp'ring of a voice
Gentle yet masterful : "Fear not, my son :
'Tis but the waiting for a better time."

Then, as I pray, the sun steals from a cloud
And touches all the world to smiling beauty.
Life—human and lesser forms—leaps joyously
To meet th' Almighty's wondrous armistice.
All nature sings in chorus—her sad face
Diffuses in a thousand rippling smiles
As sweet and youthful as when—at the dawn
Of history—she smiled anticipation
Of mighty things to come. I stand apart,
Then, joining in the melody of life,
I learn the lesson of my living here
And, strengthened, upward pass toward the light.

Yea, 'tis mine own gray thoughts people my
dreams.

Nature herself is neither sad nor joyful.
She is the mirror of our dispositions
And divers moods. So as we laugh or weep
Thro' smiles or tears, the world is magnified
Joyful or sad. The melancholic mind

Is more depressed with scenes of jollity ;
While all the horror of a gloomy hour
Hath not the power to steal from happy minds
Their sweet contentment. Thus the jocund spring
Responds to our delight, while the dun Autumn
Is but the reflex of our fearfulness.

The mind's the man : to one the merry Spring
Is but remembrant of the hopes and joys
He's lost, while th' other's mind is set athrob
With fresh and fragrant thought-waves. So with
me :

To my grim-pictured melancholic soul
Autumnal winds whisper decay, and death,
Chaos, and spiritual oblivion ;
While a pure, healthy disposition
Marks but a slumb'ring, an essential rest
For higher toil, when with awakened powers
Nature shall rise from sleep, and don the garb
And pompous glory of the new-born Spring.

THE "KIDNAPPERS."

Night !
Night of an arctic blast ;
Death in a sullen blackly overcast
Sky, wherein grim ragged cloud
 Scuds, like a world at the judgment-day
In the folds of a dull-gray burial-shroud,
 When the planets and suns shall melt away.
Ice held the channel's course
In a grasp like the grip of a great remorse.
 Ebbd and flowed—
 Where the dim lamps showed—
The tide of the city's living stream ;
 Where the chilling cold
 Clutched the heart in a deathly hold,
And froze the soul like a murder scream.

.

At the chapel door on that winter's night there was
 warmth and the glow of light,
As the well-dressed people passed along from the
 storm to their sabbath rite.
Ripple of laughter re-echoed there,
 Whilst within the preacher sued God in prayer ;
And the bells clanged rage to the stormy night.

.

From the choir resounded the suit divine :
 "To Thy poor, O Father, Thine ear incline!"

.

Crouched in the shadow, trembling and cold,
 Stood a child in years, with the features old
 With that age engraven by daily shame,
 And the hard'ning sight of sin without name.
 Clothed with rags was the fragile form,
 Which cringed at the touch of the cruel storm.
 Her sad white face gleamed dully out
 At the passing forms of the rich devout;
 Whilst—her hand outstretched—she mumbling
 said :
 "Please give me coin for a loaf of bread."

.

But the crowd passed into the warmth and light,
 And left the child to the winter's night.

.

Along the path came two in happy talk
 And loving mien : a woman and a child—
 Mother and daughter. Furred and gloved were
 they
 With all the care pertaining to the rich.
 The child was brilliant with the glow of health
 And forceful spirits; and, as children do,
 She told her happiness with robust voice.
 "O mother, God is good!—I'm sure He is
 The gentle Christ the preacher speaks of, else

Why does He give to us so much of wealth
And ev'ry happiness?"

.

Again sang the choir the prayer divine :
"To Thy poor, O Father, Thine ear incline!"

.

(The carriage had stopped at the chapel gate
'Mid clank of harness, and grooms ornate
With the vulgar show of a moneyed fool
Who had welcomed wealth as the golden rule.)

.

Lesser ones, with their eyes downcast,
Drew back as the child and mother passed
Till, the church door reached, from the shadow
there

Came the voice of the beggar in trembling prayer :
"O lady kind, with the eyes so good,
I beg you give me a coin for food !
'Thro' the whole long day I have had no bread ;
And my father's poor, and my mother's dead.
O help me, lady, I do entreat,
That I may purchase a crust to eat !"

.

With th' stare of the elect;
 And th' curléd lip
 Of censorship;
 And th' backward glance
 Of the arrogance
 That cuts th' heart of the poor with th' lance
 Of a cruel neglect,
 The darlings of fortune—great and rich—
 Delayed as that voice of mournful pitch
 Prayed hard for a mite of their worldly good
 As the paltry price for a crust of food.

.

"Who is she, mother, and why should she
 Presume to address such folks as we?"
 "Come, daughter, and leave the beggar alone:
 The poor are able to help their own."

.

Hast thou ever the poorest seen
 In their haunts of squalor and pain?
 Thy heart it would bleed, I ween,
 At the horrors in hunger's train.
 Hunger!
 Know'st thou what it is?
 Know'st thou it meaneth this?—
 A dull, sad wanting for bread;
 A yearning to be with the blessed dead
 That know no sorrow—
 No wakening morrow

Whereon to face
 The day's disgrace
 Of a begging for barest living needs;
 Till the worn soul bleeds
 With the fear of it all;
 And the night like a pall
 Falls down on a hungry bed
 And an awful sleep, where no prayers are said.

.

O God of the splendid world where the Pleasures
 laughing pass;
 God of the privileged rich and the souls of a soulless
 brass;
 Art Thou the God of the fetid slum where the baby
 cries for milk
 From the breast of the mother eight hours dead,
 While the sire with the devil drink in his head
 Kills sorrow with kindred ilk?

.

"I have swung a rich fish landward;
 Gold its fins, and heavy-weighted
 With a baker's-dozen fortunes
 In its gullet. Now, boys, toast me
 For my capture: she's the daughter
 Of the richest in the city;
 Flanked with nigh a million golden
 Sovereigns, score of which a fortune
 Mean to any of us—curse him!"

.

To the toast a dozen full of lusty throats gave a
 tribute,
 Voiced in a shout of jubilee at such a capture for
 ransom.

.

(It was a den of "kidnappers"—criminals all of
 them;
 Keeping their hunger at forceful bay by the aid of
 that stratagem
 Which tracks the child to a lonely place, and cap-
 tures it for the gold
 Given in ransom for safety, else revenged with a
 crime untold.)

.

There, in the darkest corner, sat
 The child who had flaunted the beggar-brat;
 And at her side, with a wond'ring face,
 Was the one who had begged at the worship-place.

.

"Here, girl, is a crust for your meal; and hark:
 If you dare to share with the rich one, mark,
 I'll kill your soul in a rage blood-red!
 You hear?—Enough!—To bed!
 Come, boys, for a song with a chorus bold,
 While our mate is gone for the rich man's gold."

.

*“ Come, fill up each cup, with a sip and a sup
 Drink health to old Bacchus, stand up! stand up!
 And with clinking of glasses and pledging of lasses,
 We’ll fill up our cups to the brim.*

So care at the back of us:

Ev’ry man jack of us

*Shout out our wine-song, the whole drunken pack
 of us;*

With right merry chorus—

The night’s all before us,

So fill up our cups to the brim.”

.

The door was opened, on the threshold there
 Appeared a man : wild, rough, and desperate
 As were the others. He the messenger
 Had been, to interview the wealthy sire,
 Appraise the capture, and demand the price.
 Th’ unholy company, with eager eyes
 Fixed on the face of their ambassador,
 Sprang to their feet, and questioned—

“No !”

What ?”

“ Straight out—no ! He refuses the claim ;
 Says he will see it out, that we
 Daren’t do what we threaten ; says
 He’ll have us in gaol by this time come
 To-morrow.”

"He does?"

"Yes."

"By his gold!

His daughter shall die as we have said!"

.

Upon the bed of straw the paltry meal
Had been apportioned 'tween the rich and poor :
Love was triumphant in the beggar's breast—
As is it evermore.
There had she shared it with the hungry child,
Well knowing that her sire's murderous threat
Held truth for her undoing : face to face
With death, she triumphed yet.
Above the drunken din, the filthy oaths,
The brutish converse and the vicious song,
The beggar's prayer was wafted to its Source—
The God of weak and strong.
Then, with a spirit strained to breaking-point,
And all that burning love within her eyes,
She faced the fury of her angry sire,—
And thus won Paradise.

SONG OF THE BUSH.

O, the voices of the bush are calling us away from
town,
And we're tramping off to hear them where the
grim old ranges frown;
Where the ghostly eucalypti weirdly gleam thro'
dusky nights,
And the dew on ev'ry leaf reflects a hundred soft
delights.

'Tis the calling of the bush, my boys, the calling
of the bush
With its everlasting stillness and its dim cathe-
dral hush.
And we must obey the Mother: so it's hump the
white man's load,
And we'll hear her voices calling as we stump
along the road.

She's not much for thrifty farmers; wouldn't run
a cockie long;
And the city man would sell her for the old pro-
verbial song.
Hardly worth the clearing labour—out of favour
in the mart;
But she's sacred to her children, and she calls them
to her heart.

Have you ever heard her calling, O you slave of
city ways
Where the Gold God holds possession on the pave-
ment's torrid blaze?
Where poor human souls are purchased with the
current coin of trade,
And dim, staring eyes are yearning for the
eucalypti's shade.

P'rhaps she's best when she is moody: sweet old
bush of autumn time!
Wooed by whispers of the winter in the days of
light sublime;—
Parting light of summer kisses in the winds on
ranges stern,
And a murmuring of waters 'mid the depths of
fretted fern.

From the chill embrace of winter, when the world
is 'neath a pall
With the snowflakes softly falling, and grim Death
looms over all,
She is pregnant with the promise of the springtime,
and her words
Are the songs of hope triumphant in the music of
her birds.

Springtime set in tints of splendour: saffron
splashes 'mid the green
Where the wattle beards the river; and the tangled
fern is seen

Shyly veiling plumes of em'rald from the love-light
of the sun ;
And the magpie greets the morning when the tender
night is done.

Summer's stillness at the noontide, when the gum-
leaves edgeways turn
To elude the 'passioned kisses; and the granite
ranges burn
'Neath the fire-tread of December ; and the long day
trails to dusk
When the air is heavy scented with the luscious
river-musk.

Yet we love her in her anger, when the tree-tops
lash their rage,
And across the wooded ranges floats the sable
storm-presage.
When the blast discerns the weakling, and with
soul-entrancing thrall
Flings a giant to destruction, moaning death-songs
in its fall.

Shafts of sunlight thro' the timber on the crystal
creek below
'Tween fair banks of budding beauty, where the
hurrying waters go :—
Sunny waters gurgling sweetly over golden sandy
ways,
And the big-eyed trout suspended in the still, trans-
parent bays.

Rills of nectar from the mountains splashing down
from ferny heights :

Hiding shyly in the shadows, glinting gaily in the
lights.

Cockatoos of noisy clamour in the breathless blue
above—

These are fancies of the forest ; these the voices that
we love.

So it's hump the heavy bluey, and it's boil the billy
tea

When the camp is pitched at sunset 'neath the
spreading grey-box tree.

Strife is born of city sorrows ; bush life knows no
load of care,

For here man is free and faithful, and his God is
ev'rywhere.

From the gully to the mountain rings our rough-
toned evensong,

When the camp-fire flings strange shadows all that
mighty aisle along ;

When the mopoke mourns lugubrious 'mid the
silences profound ;

And the same old moon is shining ; and the same old
world spins 'round.

From the city and the suburb ; from the street and
filthy slum

Where the struck wife shrieks her hatred ; and the
wheels of torment hum ;

From the maddened marts of commerce where the
humans crowd and crush;—

'Long the road to Never-never tramp the boys who
love the bush.

'Tis the calling of the bush, dear boys, the calling
of the bush

With its stillness of cathedrals, and its hot and
scented hush.

We must needs obey the Mother, so we'll bear the
swagman's load,

And we'll greet her well-loved voices as we swing
along the road.

HIGHER THINGS.

Live but *in* the Present, and *for* the End;
The Past is Past,—let be! or make of it
A stepping-stone toward a nobler Future.
What's bad, forget; what's good, I pray you hold
And grapple to your heart with breakless bonds:
Forging it in your armour, till your foes
(The wearying side-winds of earth's darksome
 night,
The numbing potencies of deepest Hell)
Attacking in a hundred fierce temptations
Scourge you in vain; or, if you fall beneath them,
'Tis but to rise again: your set-teethed courage
Resisting all the plots and plans of Satan
Ev'n as the mad and fierce-mouthed frothy waves
Do lave the lofty lighthouse base, mount-high
Caved in their wrecking anger, wild and wrathful,
Roaring their grim dirge of Eternity
In sounding monotone, most terrible,
But to retreat;—thus Good e'er conquers Evil.

Remember—O my fighters, brave and great!—
Remember, ev'ry faintest failing breath,
Or timorous pause, or opportunity
Worthy of Fate, yet, fearful, prodigaled

In wasteful riot or the bestial calm,
All are rare, hard-won vantage lost, for aye !
Repent ye, work ye, pray ye,—yet I say
You never can regain it. Solemn thought !
Surely, most surely 'tis a solemn thought !

Grant ground to no man,—be you in the right ;
If wrong, relent, for selfish obstinacy
Is sorry sin, and but a parent evil
Begetting progeny within its turn :
Since sin e'er propagates its sinfulness.
Think of your life as a stern climbing *upward*
Toward a certain Goal ; while each dwarfed deed,
Each privilege be-mocked, each fatal word
Shaming the sense of speech, all sorry falls
Downward, thus lengthening the weary way,
Distancing the Goal, and thus rendering life
Infinitely sterner.

Would you, now I ask,
Bound to a journey spelling life or death
According to the measure of your haste,
Sleep 'neath the tasseled willows' grateful shade
That beards the river's bank, and slumbrous couch
Your slothful form on beds of fretted fern,
The while you, yawning, mark the wanton cloudlets
Painting a populous city of the skies ?
Or rather struggle on, and on,—aware
The end of all is Rest, the best of rest :
Rest from the strife of life ; peace after war ;
An answer to the weary questioning ;
Soul-grateful, since the tired spirit knows
It is a rest both well and truly earned ?

Make ye no question of the Silent Spools
Threading your Destiny till, word for word,
And act for act, and thought for ev'ry thought,
Your Soul is bound to its Infinity.

Make ye no question ! Doth the jaded steed
Dispute the galling shaft ? the ploughing oxen
The rasping yoke ? the timid trembling sheep
The stealing of its fleece ? All are degrees,—
And Something, in the Halls of Destiny,
Doth hold, with hand that spans the Universe
Th' eternal reins, and guides the Soul aright—
Or, pitying, grants it its own evil way—
Toward its mystical Eternity.

LOVE'S PAIN.

A boy and a lass, and a red moon's light
Thro' the splendid shades of a summer night;
A faint, sweet breath from the heated hill,
And the hymn of the bush-choir—soft, and shrill.
Trees all a-speaking; night-moths flitting:
Never a time nor a scene more fitting;
The moon at the full—but the moon shall wane:
There's never a love but there's ever a pain.

A youth and a maid, and a whispered vow
Pledged with a kiss—they are older now;
And his brow is graced with the crown of thought;
And she from the golden years hath caught
A vision sweet of her life's day breaking:
Love, and a child, and a home-world making.
They set their steps to the long, long lane—
Aye, but where is the love without its pain?

A man and a woman—faces lined
With the graving tools of the years behind.
O lovers' years, ye but seem as days
To the fond eyes set in a backward gaze!
Moiling and toiling; the grim trees felling;
A tale oft written, but never the telling
Bars love from the same sad path again—
For what is love without lovers' pain?

A grave in the bush, and a rough cross-head;
And two hearts weep for a baby dead.
He had brought to the lonely man and wife
A breath of the awful unknown life.
Yet what is certain but love and dying?
The trial of birth? and a child's death crying?
They pass— with the moon at a winter wane—
Back to the stress and the dull heart strain.
Love is not love if it bear no pain.

FAILURE.

He cannot court the dream of days
When life was golden to the core;
When youth was but a psalm of praise,
And love seemed love for evermore.
Alas, his lofty brow doth show
The shameful signet of the brute;
And love hath faded long ago
As so much bitter Dead-Sea fruit.

Life is a chain his heart hath bound—
With ev'ry day a galling link
That drags his spirit to the ground
Till, tense and scared, upon the brink
Of death itself he stands aghast,
And dallies with Eternity;
And sets his sorrows of the past
Against the sorrows yet to be.

Each morn he goes with heart afire
To compass deeds of greatness, till
The noontide sees him faint and tire—
Yet in his breast a dauntless will.
Till even comes with dreadful face,
And finds him down—with heart all torn
In battle with the commonplace,
And longing for the next day's morn.

So pass his days in direful flight
Along the arcade of the years :
A sombre march of dreams of night,
And awful hells of doubts and fears.
Till sinks his soul to things of nought ;
He mates with matters mean and small,
And lulls his shame with—" I have fought :
Life holds none else but shame and gall !"

OLD PHIL.

Old Phil. of the fossickers' party—old Phil. in the
gloom of a life
Of seventy years in the vanguard: a soldier of
valorous strife.
Old Phil. of the storm-beaten forehead, white-
haired with the frosts of travail,
On a sulphurous eve of the summer unfolded his
story of bale.

“ Yes, sir, 'tis a sing'lar story; 'n' sure 's y'r 'onor
is 'ere
I've locked it away in me bosom a matter o' forty
odd year.
But I'm closin' th' ranks o' me battle; 'n' I think
if me sin is confessed
I'd be ready to tackle th' journey, 'n' look to th'
Lord f'r th' rest.

“ Is it wrong, sir, to tread on a scorp'n? Would y'
nourish a snake in y'r 'eart?
If it poisoned y'r love 'n' y'r 'onor, would y' smile
at th' shame 'n' th' smart?
What's wrong if th' wife of th' altar betrays you?—
what justice is left
But death to th' treacherous comrade?—or a life of
all 'onor bereft?

“Aye, sir, y’ may shrink at me meanin’, ’tis murder, y’ say—’n’ that’s true.

A murder as wicked as any; ’n’ th’ word sounds unwholesome to you.

But th’ death of a wife that betrays you seems sorter rough justice as well—

So I killed ’er because she was faithless, ’n’ sent ’em both bloody to hell !

“Now stop, sir, ’n’ ’ear out th’ story. Th’ boys are all down at th’ school

Awatchin’ th’ fight; ’n’ Old Phil., sir, to them, as y’ know, is a fool.

Jist bear with me, sir, to th’ finish; jist ’ear out me shame ’n’ disgrace;

’N’ set me ’eart right f’r its journey—’n’ give me a charnce f’r a place.

“I met ’er when life was a plaything. I loved with th’ love of a youth

Who worships th’ girl of ’is glory, as ’e’d worship ’is ’onor ’n’ truth.

I put all me life in ’er keepin’; I tore out me ’eart ’n’ me soul

’N’ gave ’em as faith o’ me future—’n’ made ’er th’ star o’ me goal.

“She vowed that she’d love me till death, sir : spun silken-tied cobwebs o’ lies

’Round reason ’n’ senses; ’n’ scattered th’ dust o’ me shame in me eyes.

We wed, 'n' th' glory o' summer come down, 'n'
enveloped me life;
'N' I thanked the Almighty as Giver, f'r th' gift of
a dutiful wife.

"I took 'er with me to th' forest; together we
tackled th' toil
Of th' 'eart-breakin' bush 'n' its madness, with
faces like beasts to th' soil.
With th' wine o' me life I was drunken; love-
strengthened, I looked to th' light,
While me anthem o' glory rose upwards, 'n' passed
to th' shudderin' night.

"A year, sir, 'ad gone with its goodness. I prospered. But sad was th' day
When first in 'er soft eyes I saw it: th' gaze o'er th'
'ills—far away.
Th' days came 'n' wènt 'n' she wearied; 'n' sighed
f'r the froth 'n' th' fun
She had left f'r th' love of 'er girlhood, when our
mornin' was bright with the sun.

"Then—we quarrelled. She mocked me 'n' left me;
ay, left me all lonely to fight
With th' ghosts of me love 'n' me manhood, that
throttled me soul in their might.
Alone!—till I swaggered it 'n' followed: me 'eart all
aglow to forgive;
Me soul all afire f'r its comrade; with a throbbin'
ambition to live.

“ I sought, 'n'—I found 'em. One minute I watched
their vile faces grow white
As me soul fled away to th' darkness, 'n' left but a
beast in th' night.

With a snarl I was on 'em 'n' at 'em :—me knife
slashed two throats at a breath !

I screamed with th' joy o' th' killin,—then fled, with
a gibbering Death !

“ Since then I have lived—as y'd call it—a mad
sorter life at th' best.

A life with no love but f'r whisky, with never a
night o' sweet rest ;

F'r they come to me pillow all bloody, 'n' taunt me
with scenes of 'ot love

Till I faint in me nightmares of 'orror, with a prayer
to me Maker above.

“ So—I'm come to th' end o' me tether. That's me
story, so do what y' will

With me body ; but as f'r me soul—look away, till
I settle th' bill.

Pay it all with—one—shot—thro' th' temples !
'Ere's luck ! O my Christ !”—At the words

He fell with a brain-spattered forehead,—and passed
in his check to the gods.

SONNET TO MOONLIGHT.

When Old Earth dons her nightly silver robe,
And masquerades beneath the Queen of Night
In softest, ghostliest gala-dress of light,
Unearthly spirits frolic 'round our globe.
Anon vast, fleecy vapourings float 'round
In wanton sport, striving to hide the face
Of the pale Queen, who reigns in midnight space
Silent, majestic, gloriously profound.
Great sombre shadows flit 'cross sea and ground,
Chasing the silv'ry softness with dark shades.
All is so still: barely a breath of sound
Out on the soul-like sea, in forest glades;
Save but the sobbing on the ocean shore—
Like moaning from that mighty Evermore.

SO-AND-SO.

(Craving Pardon of Brunton Stephens' Immortal Chef.)

'Twas a night of hot December, ninety-odd degrees
from zero ;
Fierce mosquitoes held high revel, and the moon
was mooning low ;
When upon the scene came cringing what I'm
pleased to call my hero—
Just a squat and ugly Chow—by name we dubbed
him "So-and-So."

He came sidling to us sideways, like a rooster
scenting battle.
He was hideous, with a face as hard as any an-
thracite ;
And a form of curves and contours liable to frighten
cattle—
As he slid into our vision on that hot December
night.

We were mouthing over ghost-yarns, and occasionally shivered

As we gazed into the darkness past our small mosquito fire;

So that when into the light there peered a face agrin and livid,

We were tempted to vacate, without delaying to enquire.

But he ventured forth so humbly, and his slippered feet so slowly

Dragged and scraped along the ground as we sat gasping in a sweat;

And his ugly face was grinning, and his aspect seemed so lowly

That within my midnight visions I can view him even yet.

“You want cookee?” was his question—and we rose and clasped him to us,

And we wept huge tears of welcome for the joys that were to come.

“Walk right in,” we sang in chorus; “walk right in—we guess you ’ll do us;

And we’ll have meat pie to-morrow, and a pudding of the plum.”

“You give wagee?” was his query—and we lovingly assured him

That a king’s remuneration should be his, and nothing less;—

And, with pledges and by promises we angled and
we lured him ;
And e'en dared within our joy his filthy pig-tail
to caress.

He seemed sinless as an infant ; and his eyes went
heav'nward turning
As he begged us modestly our *bona-fides* to pro-
duce.
And we set his pig-tail bobbing, and his piggy eyes
a-burning,
As we waved huge golden nuggets in his coun-
tenance obtuse.

O, we passed a pleasant evening on that hot night
of December,
As he vowed in pidgeon-English friendship,
love, and faith eterne ;
And at supper-time he made us savory cakes to
long remember,
With a subtle hint of spice to start our stomachs
on the yearn.

O, we went to bed delighted with the promise of
the morrow ;
And we chuckled in our wisdom as we mused on
So-and-So :
Of the pork-pies and the puddings—things to give
surcease from sorrow ;
And we passed to sleep expectant, with our
stomachs all aglow.

In the morning, lo, he called us—had the tea and
toast a-steaming;

All his walnut face a-shining as he watched our
glad surprise;

All his infantine emotions in his coal-black eyes
a-gleaming,

As he set before our gasping selves as many hot
meat pies.

O, we fell with zest upon them, never asking whence
their coming;

O, our teeth played right royal battle with the
juicy hunks of meat;

While he sat aside a-smiling, with his finger-ends
a-strumming,

And his almond eyes down-looking in a manner
quite discreet.

O, what could we do but trust him? O, what
could we do but leave him

In proud charge of our belongings as we went
to work the patch?

Telling him our ev'ry secret, so as not to gall and
grieve him

With a hint of cruel suspicion—this pure soul
without a match!

So we swung our picks right gladly, and we chanted
songs right gaily,

As we hauled the buckets brimming to the chanty
of "Yo-ho!"

And commented on the fact of fancy cakes and puddings daily,
And adjudicated on the points of priceless So-and-So.

But the working hours dragged slowly, and our stomachs waxed a-weary
Of the waiting for the twilight, when he promised we should dine.
O, we never grew so hungry as the day dragged on a-dreary—
As our longings went to thee—celestial spirit superfine !

When we reached the camp we hailed him : "So-and-So, dear friend, come hither !
Let us feast our gaze upon thee, and our teeth within your pies.
Saffron friend, we pray, come hither——"; only echo answered "Whither?"
As we searched with growing zest, and gazed askance in our surprise.

But he came not—O, he came not ! sweet and stately Chinese lily !
Tho' we called with voices drooping, and our spirits waxing sore.
So we lit the same old camp-fire, and we boiled the same old billy,
And we feasted on the same old bread and dripping, as of yore.

Then it came to us so slyly, in the sugar-pot con-
cealing,
Came upon us in an agony of grief and cruel
woe;—
Just a little note of parting, by its folded end re-
vealing,
Just a *billet-doux* of friendship from the truant
So-and-So.

“Friends and brothers,” ran the missive; “tho’ an
Eastern son celestial,
By best college education have I learned the
Western wiles;
Left behind me all my native tricks—so lowly and
so bestial;
Gathered ’round me all the glory from the city’s
highest styles.

“I was ‘stony,’ so, despairing, I was forced to
‘raise the breezes’;
It was time I did the mandarin in Sydney city’s
streets;
So I struck your camp at sunset, and wheezed out
the same old wheezes
As I’ve wheezed them o’er and o’er upon the same
old country beats.

“But, dear friends, you were *so* easy, that I thought
myself a-sleeping;
And I feared to swift awaken and discover it a
dream;

So I pity took upon you ;—placed your gold in safer
keeping

Just to prove to you, my brothers, that things
are not what they seem.

“ Just to help me on my journey I purloined your
horse at starting—

Don't say 'steal,' 'tis such a nasty word!—I
know you will not mind.

And the pies you ate with gusto,—weep a tear-
drop at the parting,

For I guess if sought till doomsday, TOM THE
CAT YOU'LL NEVER FIND !

“ Just a word, my friends, concluding :—Let this
be a lesson to you ;

Learn that China when she starts is just the
'cutest cuss alive.

If you train the wily heathen he is duty bound to do
you,

To instruct you by your teaching just how many
beans make five.”

O we cursed him and his offspring ! O we tackled
his ancestors

As we raged around the camp-fire on that hot
December night ;

And we sent him to the region where his soul must
be asbestos

If it stand the sultry climate, with the bonfires
all bedight.

In the morning by the sunrise, softly, silently, we
vanished :

For we'd worked the patch to death, and So-and-
So our fortune had.

O we set across the ranges grim, like patriots long
banished ;

And we humped the lonely road to Sydney city
"on our pad."

WHEN CHRISTMAS CALLS.

The months go by and the years go by;
And we live our days, and we fight,—and die.
And there's little fun but the bestial fun
As we tread the neck of the weaker one.
We are but a sport from the brute-beast stem,
And the lust of love is our diadem.
But we've one white word in the Book of Time,
When our souls spring out to the Christmas
chime.

Like a mile-stone seen on a hellish track
By the drooping eyes on the roads out back;
To be gladly hailed as a resting place
And a fresh stage passed in the throbbing race :—
Thro' the dead-black year breaks the Christmas
morn
With its pompous hymn of the Christ new-born;
And we lift sad eyes to the day of days
Ere we brace our swags for the same old ways.

In the city's heart, where the life is keen
With the cruel stress of the dull routine;
Where the mill-wheels grind; and the stampers
smite
Thro' the heat of day, and the dew of night;

In the creeping mine where the streaked gold
gleams ;
In the filthy slum where the struck wife screams :
There's a breathing-pause in the pulsing rounds
As the old, old Christmas wish resounds.

We are weird-like mites with our stress and strut,
And our souls are chained to the body's rut :
Wee marionettes 'neath the prying glass
Of the greater gods, as they laughing pass
Thro' the streaming dust of the deathless stars
Where the Unseen makes, and the Unseen mars ;
Yet we lift ourselves to a higher worth
On the day when the Christmas bells ring forth.

So ring them home from the bush and plain,
And join their hands 'round the board again.
The wayward girl, and the ne'er-do-well
Who has set his face to the fires of hell.
O ring them home to the haunts of youth
When their eyes were clear, and their lips spake
truth.
'Tis Christmas-tide, and they tread the ways
To the home where a grey-haired mother prays.

They come from the plains where the plover call ;
From the backblocks school and the college hall ;
From the hills where the west wind breathes its
scorn ;
From the anchored ships at the gates of morn.
They come from the bush, from the solemn bush
With its noble aisles of a nameless hush :—
The good and bad in a bond divine
To circle hands for the auld lang syne.

DOWN WHERE THE LACHLAN FLOWS.

I met her first at a country dance ;
Her eyes crost mine in a backward glance
That fired my soul to a torrid love
Like the hot, hot night in the sky above.
I was fresh from town ; I had scorned the sex
And pitied the sickly fools who vex
Their hearts with a woman's love and hate,
And flaunt their lives in the face of Fate.
But—to-night my heart in its dreaming goes
To Wunya, down where the Lachlan flows.

She was waltzing true with a moon-eyed clod
Whose face was turned to its natal sod
In the bestial stare of the under-born,—
And she left me there with a heart forlorn.
For the game was hers, and she played it fine ;
But I kissed her lips, and the game was mine.
I pressed her close in the throbbing dance,
And our souls dissolved in a daring glance.
We wandered out where the night-mists rose
'Round Wunya, down where the Lachlan flows.

I bared my heart and I vowed my love;
And the 'passioned breath of the night above
Stooped low, and whispered it back to me
Thro' the maze of a ghostly grey-box tree.
From along the creek came the mopoke's cry
Like the wail of a restless soul gone by.
While low in the west, 'mid a blood-red light,
My star sank down to the depths of night.
And I shuddered there, where the death-weed grows
At Wunya, down where the Lachlan flows.

Our life was a wondrous hymn of praise;
Our loving the wine of drunken days.
I flung my soul to her soft white hands,
And wrapt my heart in a lover's bands.
I dragged myself to the filth of earth
And played the fool for her silly mirth.
For she was cruel as they all are cruel,—
For she played the queen, while I played the fool.
And I pray that her paltry conscience knows
Of the life she damned where the Lachlan flows.

She was fair as false, and as false as fair:
For her face was lit with the beauty rare
Of olden days when the world was young;
And saint-faced maidens their favours flung
To the gallant knights as they rode to fight
For the joy of war, and the love of right.
She held my soul in her hands, and said
That she'd play me true,—and our hearts were wed.
But—ha-ho!—alas!—'tis my heart now goes
To the dancing-shed where the Lachlan flows.

The fire is low; and the night is cold;
And the world is stale; and I'm growing old.
So end your dreaming, and take this curl
You stole from the head of that lovely girl;
And the scented notes, and her withered flowers
With mem'ries sweet of those golden hours;
And thrust them deep in the dying fire,
While you suck your pipe as the sparks mount
higher.

For she married the clod, and a life of prose
In Wunya, down where the Lachlan flows.

FLOWER FACES.

I'd like to go back to the old days :
The days of the leal and the true ;
When life was all glamour and sunshine,
And troubles were few.
Sweet women with faces of flowers
Are filling my dreaming to-night ;
And the wearisome hours
With past loves are alight.

'Twas then that my youth was in blossom ;
'Twas then that the mornings would bring
Soft love—which was ever a tender
And tremulous thing.
But the night came, and brought its disgraces ;
And left on the sweet spirit-faces
Its gloom from unspeakable places,
And death brought its sting.

I'm dreaming to-night of the old boys,
Who spake of me then
As a friend among friendships, and placed me
A man among men.
But my youth slowly died—
Till my face I would hide
In an uttermost shame—and a sorrow beside.

O faces of flowers and laughter,
O stay with me, here, in the dark;
O light up the night of my present
With the old tender spark.
I'm afraid of the *other* grim faces
From deep hellish places—
Which mock me, with frightful grimaces;—
And corpses, all ghastly and stark!

Ah! they fade from my sight as I venture
To press with a kiss
Fair mouths like the hearts of sweet roses;
Blue eyes of ineffable bliss.
I awake!—It is cold!
And I'm feeling dashed old!
And I'm two feet in hell with the gout!—
And the fire is dead out!

THE DRINKING SONG.



Come, fill up each cup, with sip and with sup
Drink health to old Bacchus, stand up ! stand up !
And with clinking of glasses,
And pledging of lasses,
We'll fill up our cups to the brim.

So care at the back of us, ev'ry man jack of us
Shout out our wine song, the whole drunken pack
of us.

Come, join in our chorus :
Tho' fools may abhor us
Good comrades encore us, so fill up our cups.

A right merry night we will spend, till the light
Of the morrow we'll toast gay old Bacchus' might
With roaring good voices ;
With host that rejoices
To fill up our cups to the brim.

Come, fill them again ! with might and with main
We'll thunder a song with a jolly refrain
And rollicking chorus ;—
The night's all before us,
So fill up our cups to the brim.

The bigot in frocker, with neck in white shocker,
With tell-the-tale nasal, cries, "Wine is a mocker!"

So down with it! End it!

'Tis a wrong,—so amend it!

And empty our cups from the brim.

But fill them once more as we filled them before
For a wrong often righted is right evermore.

So, till the east yellows

Come—jolly good fellows—

Come,—fill up our cups to the brim.

MOLLY MAGUIRE.

O, I am pinin' an' frettin' with love f'r ye !
Faith, can ye wonder me soul is afire ?
See how me spirit is soft as a dove f'r ye,—
Y've tangled me heart-strings, sweet Molly
Maguire.

What with th' buttermilk face an' th' head of her—
Head like th' gold when th' sun is ashine—
What with th' velvet-blue eyes an' th' tread of her :
Sure, I'd be happy if Molly were mine.

Right in her sweet rosy palm lies th' heart o' me :
Lies like a poor, wounded bird, all afraid ;
Sometimes she crushes, when every part o' me
Longs f'r a smile from th' crool little jade.

But hey, when she smiles 'tis th' sun in th' face of
her—
Hey, 'tis th' smile an' th' blush I admire ;
Seems as I look I c'n see in th' place of her
Angel, or something—sweet Molly Maguire !

Sure, she's no eyes f'r the other young larrikins,
Court as they may do, all scented an' curled;
What do I care f'r their jokes an' their barrackin's?
If Molly'd say "Yes,"—I'd be king o' th' world.

O, I'm a-frettin' with tenderest love f'r ye:
Love, need ye wonder me heart is afire?
See, how y've made me as soft as a dove f'r ye—
Made me y'r lover—sweet Molly Maguire!

DISAPPOINTMENT.

The gum-leaves are wet with the dews of the dawn-
ing,
The phantoms of midnight have shrunk to the
hills;
The magpies are singing the lays of the morning
With musical rapture that startles and thrills.

The sky is aglow with the glint and the glory
Of day that is breaking thro' mists of the night :
Sweet day, that is crowning the forest trees hoary
With a halo of gladness and hyaline light.

Away to the west an old moon is repining ;
Afar to the north a faint fleecing of cloud
Like a ghost-ship on opaline waters reclining ;
Around, the grim ranges are wrapt in their
shroud.

O, here's for a ride thro' the rustling grasses !
O, hail to the hour that is best of the hours !
A flip and a fig for the world as it passes
And leaves one alone, 'mid the ferns and the
flow'rs.

A brave horse beneath you, the steep hills before
you;

A pipe in your mouth and the dawn in your eyes.
With no one to hate you and no one to bore you;
No malice to wound you in friendship's disguise.

A shout and a strain in the saddle : up higher
And higher you climb in the strength of your
years.

Past granite where yesterday's noontide of fire
Has been cooled with the night-dew, and soothed
by its tears.

Up, up to the summit;—a poise on a boulder
As in triumph you gaze on the scene at your feet.
IT IS BLASTED AND BARE;—and the world is grown
older;
And the laugh of a jackass speeds on your retreat.

INCONVENIENCES.

Hey, for a camp in the lonely bush
Away from the city's heat and rush !
And ho for a spell from a nagging wife ;—

Hey-ho for the simple life !
I'd rise with the sun and the dewy morn ;
Tramp with the best and the miles I'd scorn ; —
But I fear that I'd miss my morning shower
In the chill of the seventh hour.

Ho for the hunt and the fierce-fought kill
Of the grim "old man" on the wooded hill !
Hey for the swift sharp journey back
Thro' the maze of the river-track !
Then it's grill a steak to a tender brown
With a touch of sauce from the nearest town ;—
But it's beastly rough without knife and fork,
And the sauce is without a cork.

Hey for the hills and the gullies wide
Where a man may read as he laughing ride
The truth of things and the joy of things,
And the health that the hill-breeze brings,
Hey-ho for the gum-trees' whisp'ring leaves,
Where the soul ne'er sulks and the heart ne'er
grieves :—
But I miss the sight of my morning "rag,"
For the time is inclined to lag.

Aha for the axe and its ringing voice;
With an edge that maketh the heart rejoice
In the joy of toil as the muscles strain,
And you're ever a man again.
The summer sun is at torrid strength
When at "Spell-oh" time you untwist your length
'Neath the shade of a blackbutt spreading near;—
When ah,—for a pint of beer!

The night creeps down and the sweet dewes come;
And the insects sing with a drowsy hum;
The creek plays flutes on the yellow stones,
And the bush has a hundred tones.
I lie awake in my six-eight tent
Free from worry and free from rent—
Awake to the choir of the mystic land;—
But oh, for a German band!

Hey-ho for the "Block" of an afternoon
When the girls are out and the heart's in tune;
And the train awaits if you wish to speed,
Or the taxi, or cabby's steed.
A sweet cold lunch and a drive to the course;
The joy of watching the same wrong horse;
Back to dinner, when nought will do
But an opera-box for two.

MEALS AND MORALS.

Hast ever noted how a city's meals
Are faithful reflex of its character
And divers moods? Probably not.
Life is too brief, thou say'st, to waste the hours
In noting things so eminently silly
And grossly unproductive.

Ne'ertheless
To those inclining to the pensive state
A city's meals are worth attention.

Note first the counter-lunch, whereon do fall
In splendid havoc sundry derelicts
With a pint-pot as open sesame.
The dulcet joys of doubtful German sausage;
The bread of yester morn, and the cat pie
Culled from the roofs suburban.

Note yon man:
His face aflame with joy and beer; his mouth
Replete with delicacies; 'tween
The bites magnificent he from his pot
Sippeth right unctuously. He the first—
Primeval madreporé—of the great city's eaters,
Save the park-dwellers, searching for the crust
In tins repulsive.

Next the fourpenny meal :
A sort of missing odoriferous link
'Twixt and between, e'en to the hashing shop
Which costs one sixpence,—three full courses,
 tea,
And toothpick. Here young thirty-bob a week
With those who, past the prime, aspire no more
To owning motor-cars and racing yachts,
Do congregate, and indigestion rife
Is known among them.

Next the ninepenny :—
The same old indigestion better served
And glossed with cleaner linen. Here the men
Of growing wage, yet careful habit, meet
To chew the adamantine beef so-called.
Here the plum pudding is dubbed "Palestine"
Or some such sobriquet.

The shilling meal
Is the next bead upon this living string.
The men are fatter, much more bilious; see
The lordly way they sip their "baby" wine
All f'r a bob!

From thence by divers stages
The eighteenpenny, two bob : better wine
And fatter men, more bilious, baggy-eyed;—
To the sublimity of two half-crowns—
Speak low : for thou art now on holy ground!

THE SMALL BOY.

He of all autocrats the greatest,—he
The SMALL BOY: chief derider of the things
Of reverence and greatness; he to whom
Subservient we,—awake, my Muse, and sing.
Insouciance hath marked him for her own.
He flouts our rigid rules, and scorns the thralls
Of stiff convention. To him life's a jade
From whom to wrest sweet sleeping hours of ease
(What time he draws our screw) and dallied errands,
And cards of cigarettes.

For him the cab-driver
Restrains his foaming steed, lothful to chide
Him who, with cynic's gaze, doth scorn the danger,
And walks unscathed thro' horrors that would
scotch

Mere man. Likewise for him the tram bell clangs
Its penetrating sweetness long drawn out.
He 'scapes by a hairsbreadth, yet e'en the driver
Sports an ingratiating smile,—e'en tho' he would
Within his heart set twenty trams upon him.
The policeman unctuous grows; the pompous grey-
beard

Side-steps a swift aside, to grant him space,
Since he is prone to vacillate.

Anon

He meets a kindred spirit. Soon their eyes
Kindle aflame, and nostrils scenting battle,
They strive upon the public thoroughfare
In grim vendetta, whiles around them pass
The city's multitude, obsequious
And, should they meet the doughty champions'
gaze,
Beaming benignant praise.

Our office reached,
A wrathful boss at sight of him relents—
Scorning to soft insinuate an hour
Hath passed f'r a ten-minute journey. He
Inimitable, dominant, prevails
O'er all the world.

Methinks, when judgment comes,
And tired stars are tumbling down thro' space
To death eternal; and when monstrous night
Steeps the sad universe in fun'ral dress
'Neath which the direful gods shall spin their
threads

Of awful destiny they—the august ones—
Shall pause abashed as he, the same SMALL BOY,
Shall, from some safe and dizzy vantage ground,
Proffer unto their principal the 'plaint
For cigarette cards;—what time the judgment
Shall be suspended till old Gabriel seeks
'Neath folded wings the wherewithal to please
His majesty the SMALL BOY,—than whom none
More splendid are, nor regal, nor eternal :
He—only he—shall flout OLD TIME himself.

BONDI.

(Written on Bondi Headland, N.S.W.)

Far down where the roar of Old Ocean
Makes mystical music profound;
On the beach where the screams of the sea-bird
Incessantly sound.

In the waste of the wildering waters
That spout in majestic wrath,
I breathe in the glory of living
With their vomiting froth.

On the limitless line of horizon
The ships come and go in the clouds;
The billows roll lazily shorewards
Like ghosts in their shrouds.

Fair Bondi! thy voices speak grandly
Of life and the duties of life;
Of triumphs to come in the stillness
Of peace after strife.

Mid the murmur of musical breezes
I ponder the Future to come:
My life with its passionate phases;
The glory of home.

And I know that the stress of my living
 Shall be tested in strengthening shocks
On the front of my strenuous courage—
 Like waves on the rocks.

Down the grim beaten hillside I wander,
 And Bondi's delight is my own;
The strength of the strong is my courage,
 Its sorrow my crown.

RABBITS.

Who hath not stood from early morn and watched
The inward rush of workers to the city?
From ev'ry suburb, like the spokéd wheel,
Converge the trains and trams to one great centre
Where, thro' the day, the thousands tear around
And "make a living."

First the early trains
Bearing the manual toilers—free, enlightened,
Proud, and yet grimed withal, who in the sight
Of Brother Fat are classed as so much vermin,
Yet at election times are as much worth
As those of greater bulk and substance.

See

The due preponderance of second-classers;
Tobacco fumes hang 'round the panting morn
And herald their approach.

Once at the city
Bill and his pal and all the rest of them
Get right to honest graft and woo the sweat
And stress of eight-hours' labour. They the mean
And mangy rabbits of the human warren,
Despiséd and downtrod.

Next now the trains
Of eight o'clockers come along: the girls
Who deftly finger pickles, cigarettes,

Jams, and the other mysteries of life.
Still doth the second-class preponderate.
The dressing, note, a little overdone,
Showing the many colours and the clash
That hurts. The spirits, high; the manners, force-
ful.

They, in their turn, disgorge, and frantic rush
The little holes we call the doors.

Then come

The drab gentility of earth's small fry
Of grey professionalism. See the thin
Fine shankéd clerk clutching his penny daily
By which he swears true fealty and devotion.
These are the well-known grade of human bunnies
Who're "something in the city." Many they
Who willy-nilly travel second-class
And try to hide the fact. Here the first-class
Is more conspicuous. A deal of cant
And humbug may be heard, withal expounding
The social unrest and the fleeing fat men
Taking with them their outraged capital
To more salubrious climes.

Also much comment

Upon the state of this one's tiny garden,
That one's milch-cow, the other's poultry-run.
It may be seen that some habiliments
Have sought the subtlest corners of the dye-pot,
Necessitating ink upon the creases
And divers buttonholes.

They in their turn alight,
And scamper underground, to moil and sweat.

Then come the nine-o'clockers, rank and file
And the weird mixture of the bank and store

Of a great city. Here the first-class cars
Are filled; the mystic hum-and-haw is heard
To good advantage; nations rise and fall
Upon the fierce opinions waged. They, too,
Upon arrival at the mighty warren
Rush madly up and down the dusty drives,
And dive within the little dismal burrows.
From thence the order goes from low to high
Until we see the straggling top-notchers
Alighting with patrician air, to dally
With a kind Fate within the warren's walls,
More for appearance sake than aught beside,
And p'rhaps to please the wife. See how they walk,
Let us step cringingly behind them, soft
With all due deference;—take off your hat!

ON THE ROAD.

No. 1.

MONDAY—FRIDAY.

Monday morn and a winter wind
When I leave the wife and the kids behind;
Seize the rug and the faithful bag;
Rubbers and gloves, and the morning "rag."
Darkness and night enshroud the house;
A sleepy groan from a sleepy spouse:
"What about breakfast?" I answer "Nay;"
" 'Refreshments' only an hour away."
A hasty kiss on each sleeping face.
"Be good till Friday"—and then a race
For the early train that starts my week
Of tramp and toil, where the drummers seek
The orders wary that must be caught;
Softgoods, hard goods, and ev'ry sort.
Heigho! but a traveller's life's no good;
Vagabond hunt for the rent and food.
Rarely a home and a smiling wife
To lighten a fellow's stress and strife.
No sun-haired kiddies with lusty lung,
And nightly frolic to keep one young.
As I scoot to the station I oft declare

“I’ll give it up !” but alas, who’ll dare
To play with the fates that map one’s way
Through the moil and toil of his working day ?

* * * *

’Tis Friday night and the week is past.
And the old through train is speeding fast.
Biz. is good and my book looks well,
And I’m scenting home and the week-end spell.
Spencer-street and the tram awaits.
I take my seat and I thank the Fates
For the great real joy of the Friday night.
I find the home and the loved ones right ;
A smiling wife and a supper spread ;
Slippers warmed and a well-earned bed.
Heigho ! but the life might well be worse ;
And a fellow wouldn’t be worth a curse
If he didn’t consider his Friday night
Well worth a parting and five days’ fight.
Why, the morning kiss from a wee, sweet mouth
Is worth a journey from north to south ;
And the sense of freedom and homely rest
Repays a tour from east to west.
So what’s the good of a gloomy face ?
We’re all of us booked for the same old race :
Some must wander and some must stray ;
And we all must work so our kids can play.
But the bright lode-star of a drummer’s life
Is Friday night and the home and wife.

No. 2.

TRAVELLING BY "GOODS."

Aha!—the S.M. says there is a goods
To leave at noon. So, pray, why tarry here?
The town is worked, biz. good, the book well-filled:
Let's take the goods by all means. Yea, forsooth,
If but our week shall end the sooner, then
What boots cramped limbs and shattered bones?—

Away,
The goods is signalled. Sign the document
That grants the service full immunity
Shouldst thou p'rhaps come to grief, and seize the
seat
Allotted to the guard.

Alas, he says

"An hour yet before we get a start!"
Ah well, we'll smoke and scan the morning rag
For shreds of news from home.

At last she moves
Slowly and pond'rously; our fellow freight
Cans of stale milk, and slaughtered calves, a heap
Of odoriferous hides, and—woe, alas!—
Recumbent hogsheads guileless of their beer
Save for malodorous drippings. Never mind,
We'll strike old Bendigo in ample time
To catch the three-fifteen, and then for home
In time to take the offspring to the play.
Aye, but the privilege is dearly bought!
Sure, our anatomy is grievous sore
At such unwonted buffeting. At each station
She pulleth up and shunteth, while the hours—

The precious golden hours—march swiftly past,
Mocking our agony. Alas, the night
Strides on apace till, half-way down the line,
We are side-tracked to give the passenger
Her right of room. Upon the guard's hard face—
Dethroned and cursed at—shows a cynic's smile;
And ultimately, tired, cramped, and starved,
We're jolted into Bendigo in time
To catch the ten-to-seven.

Well, what's the good?

It is not meet that trav'lers should complain,
But rather suffer like old Spartan stoics
The grim vicissitudes that throng his week
From Monday until Friday. Never mind:
The week is done, with two whole days before us
Wherein to woo the festive cabbage patch;
And wash the dog; and take the kids to church
As painful penalty for our misdeeds
Upon the rocky road from town to town.

DESTINY.



When night dews fall, morn's breeze shall northern
be,—

That's dust, that's temper,—that's against the
laws.

A soul for hell!—so, thro' Eternity,

A big effect oft breeds from little cause.

A smoky fire murders all ambition;

And hope clings fondly to the bowels' state;

A poem is framed upon the poet's condition;

And faith flees frightened if the train be late.

Man's happiness is gauged by bill-of-fare;

A rolling stud royal business retards;

Vast enterprise depends upon the air,

A rotting tooth, or a bad night at cards.

St. Paul's was built by taxing poor men's fuel;

Fate made a Shakespeare of a skinner's son;

The stage was shaped by bishop's word and
school;—

So are we wind-blown puppets, ev'ryone.

We draw our lines, and fix our pigmy rules,

Yet rich and poor are all God's little fools.

THE DAY'S ROUND.

A Reversolet.

Humble cottage;—princely rent;
Loving wife; inky coat;
Shabby bag; and shoulders bent;
Frantic rush for ferry-boat.
Scheming how to stretch his "screw"
To impossibilities.
Life worn out, and nothing new.
"Something in the city!"—slaving all the
day.
Life worn out, and nothing new.
To impossibilities
Scheming how to stretch his "screw."
Frantic rush for ferry-boat;
Shabby bag, and shoulders bent;
Loving wife; inky coat;—
Humble cottage; princely rent.

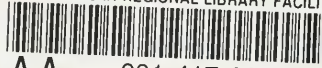
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